

Saskatchewan HISTORY

★ Pioneer
Journalism
PART II

BY

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★ The Saskatchewan
Purchasing Co.

BY

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Pioneer Journalism in Saskatchewan 1878-1887

PART II: Some Characteristics of the Territorial Press.

SURVEYING the newspaper field as a whole in this period, we notice that all the editors were men who had had considerable experience in the Ontario or Manitoba newspaper field prior to moving to the Territories. With the exception of Messrs. Davin and Atkinson at Regina, who were primarily journalists, the pioneer editors had been trained as practical printers rather than writers. The papers at the Territorial capital were able to support a modest staff, but the staff of the smaller papers usually consisted of one or two men, assisted by a few people in the surrounding settlements who gratuitously supplied local news. As a result of their eastern experience, these men turned out extremely neat and typographically excellent papers. They took great pride in the mechanical excellence of their journals, as when the *Moosomin Courier* said to its readers, "We have procured a new heading for the *Courier*. How do you like it? We ordered it from Winnipeg and think it is as fine a piece of workmanship as we ever saw."¹

If we can believe their own statements, none of the pioneer journalists in this period made very much money from their papers. It was a general custom for them to comment on the state of their publication's finances at the end of a volume, or the end of a calendar year. The theme was often the same—they were just getting by, if all subscriptions were paid they could improve the paper a little, that the development of the district which they had counted on had not taken place but that they had faith in the country and that next year would be prosperous for everyone.² More concrete proofs that the business was not lucrative were the sidelines which the editor undertook. Mr. Laurie, after losing the government printing contract, became a coroner, an issuer of marriage licenses, a raiser of Aylesbury Ducks, and an agent for both an eastern book company and a garden seed firm.³ Mr. Weidman, the sole editor, publisher and reporter of the *Qu'Appelle Progress*, had similarly diversified pursuits as an agent for sewing machines and pianos, a vendor of white leghorn eggs,⁴ and the proprietor of a store selling stationery, English books and "violin strings, purses and false faces."⁵ The foregoing were much more typical means of raising extra money than the \$12,000.00 which Mr. Davin allegedly received from the government printing and from serving on a Royal Commission.⁶ Davin's income would also be supplemented by his indemnity as a Member of Parliament, and by royalties from his literary publications.⁷ Regardless of the size of his income, every editor sought to supplement his resources by doing job printing work.

¹ *Moosomin Courier*, January 15, 1885.

² See for example, the start of Volume II, *Qu'Appelle Progress*, November 11, 1885.

³ *Saskatchewan Herald*, September 10, 1887; March 31, 1885; August 1, 1881; September 9, 1878; May 25, 1885.

⁴ *Qu'Appelle Progress*, March 19, 1886; April 30, 1886.

⁵ *Ibid.*, April 30, 1886.

⁶ *Regina Journal*, February 3, 1887.

⁷ He was the author of *The Irishman in Canada*, and in 1889 he published *Eos: An Epic of the Dawn and Other Poems*, which was the first volume of verse to be printed in the North-West Territories.

But a meagre income and diversified activities were only a part of the difficulties under which frontier printers labored. The story of Patrick Laurie's tribulations and near escapes, though more severe than those suffered by his contemporaries, makes one wonder at his fortitude. A flood in 1882, irregular mails, erratic telegraph service, slow deliveries of paper, pressure of militia duties during the Rebellion, were among the vicissitudes of the enterprise. No other paper in the Territories had so many and so dramatic a series of difficulties—but they all had a goodly share of them. The *Vidette's* headings didn't arrive in time;⁸ the *Progress's* exchange papers were late and it found difficulty in becoming "fully acquainted with all the sources for obtaining local news;"⁹ the *Times* had some of its equipment stranded on the river ice, too many bosses, and an editor with "irregular habits"; the *Courier* was criticized by townspeople for trying to "boom the town,"¹⁰ the *Progress's* office was so cold that the presses wouldn't work properly, despite "burning an extravagant amount of wood and coal,"¹¹ and the *Leader's* editor received a heavy fine for a slight offence, after criticizing the local police.¹² Every paper had difficulty in collecting its accounts and most of them, realizing the futility of trying to collect all their debts in cash, offered to take produce.

We can now appreciate some of the difficulties of pioneer journalism but what was the finished product like? It was above all colorful and vigorous. These individualistic editors were men of strong conviction both personal and political and this was inevitably reflected in their vivid and forthright style of writing. These men of the frontier did not believe in feigned impartiality or subtle innuendoes—they said what they thought and they said it distinctly and enthusiastically.

It was a common phenomenon of the "80's" to see not just editorials, but ordinary news write-ups interspersed with the writers' personal opinions. In what purported to be a straight report of the speech of a Liberal candidate for Parliament, the *Prince Albert Times* interjected little comments like, "His effort was a very lame one, besides the people of this country are not seeking advice from strangers on this point."¹³ Nor could anyone accuse the *Leader's* account of Poundmaker's trial of being coldly impartial; "The prisoner who stood in the dock is a handsome and truly noble—nay, kingly looking man, and one never felt more deeply how atrocious was the crime of Riel, as on hearing how he accomplished the deluding of this brave but misguided man into treason."¹⁴ A far more typical manifestation of enthusiasm was a highly imaginative and dramatic treatment of the subject, such as when Davin, protesting against a stiff court fine imposed on himself, said, "Of all forms of oppression, judicial oppression is the most odious. It is a form under which the screw can press and the rack torture and the knife go deep and even the groan of the victim be unheard."¹⁵

⁸ *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, October 9, 1884.

⁹ *Qu'Appelle Progress*, November 20, 1885.

¹⁰ *Moosomin Courier*, March 12, 1885.

¹¹ *Qu'Appelle Progress*, January 22, 1886.

¹² *Regina Leader*, issues of August, 1883.

¹³ *Prince Albert Times*, February 18, 1887.

¹⁴ *Regina Leader*, August 17, 1885.

¹⁵ *Regina Leader*, August 30, 1883.

These papers did not believe in sensationalism or scandal in their reporting and they avoided blaring headlines.¹⁶ All the papers made strenuous efforts to give calm and judicial reports of the Riel Rebellion and spoke scathingly of the exaggerated scoops and alarmist rumors which appeared in eastern papers at the time. They also carried fairly adequate accounts of the North-West Council sessions and debates in the House of Commons dealing with Territorial affairs. But political campaigns made the soberest editor lose his restraint and they became generally biased in their selection of articles and their manner of reporting. For example, the *Qu'Appelle Progress* described the speeches of the two local candidates for the Commons as follows: "Mr. Perley's address was a perfect triumph; he carried nearly the whole meeting. Mr. Dickie made a feeble speech of twenty-five minutes."¹⁷



—CANADIAN NORTH-WEST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

First office of the *Saskatchewan Herald*, Battleford, and its editor, P. G. Laurie.

Another feature of North-West reporting was a morbid realism. Any murder, or especially a hanging, would be described down to the last grisly detail as to the dimensions of the gallows and the number of times the body twitched.¹⁸

If his contemporaries were colorful because of the realism and frankness of their language, Davin was even more colorful because of his poetic imagination. Furthermore, his imagination was stirred by commonplace things like the prairie

¹⁶ There were few headlines, as we understand the term today. The usual method was to put one dispatch after another in a column with a single description at the top, e.g., "Foreign News." However, some items would have their special headings. They were sometimes quaintly phrased "An Awful Catastrophe," or "Terrible Railway Horror" (*Regina Leader*, August 2, 1883) but even these were not in bold type and never exceeded one column in width.

¹⁷ *Qu'Appelle Progress*, February 17, 1887.

¹⁸ *Regina Leader*, April 10, 1884.

sunset. This lyric journalist, like his contemporaries, succeeded in avoiding drabness, but his particular manner of doing so was unique, when he could describe a blizzard thus—"the snow dust which caught up and given life looked like myriads of fairies chased by the billowing ice-breathing giant . . . their gossamer skirts blown around their delicate limbs, the cadence of their innumerable cries heard like phantom music in the rare pauses of the wind."¹⁹

Having examined the style of reporting followed in this era, it will now be illuminating to consider the content of these papers according to their subject matter. The weather has in all ages been a topic of interest. There were no scientific weather forecasts to publish in the 1880's, but people were peculiarly sensitive to reports of the past week's weather, because the "North-West" and "inhuman climate" were synonyms in eastern Canada and Britain. All papers sporadically carried little notes, in their local news columns, commencing like the following: "The weather is now quite warm. Oh for a good rain!" A number of journals supplemented these notes with a complete report of maximum and minimum temperatures for the past seven days. This information, which was obtained from the nearest Mounted Police barracks, was usually carried only for the winter months.

Another column of interest was the weekly statements of current market prices. The *Saskatchewan Herald* started the practice of quoting the prices of grains and furs at different points in the North-West and continued publishing these spasmodically to the end of this period.²⁰ Most other papers carried them intermittently but the *Regina Leader* was the most assiduous, giving weekly quotations from Bradstreet and comparisons of prices and wages in Winnipeg and Regina in the early years. By the end of the 1878 to 1887 period, even the *Leader* was carrying these irregularly.

All the papers devoted considerable space to church matters. In pioneer towns the churches were one of the main centres of community activity and as a result sponsored a high proportion of the social functions, which were given extensive coverage by the local paper. But beyond this the papers not only carried announcements of the times of worship but also carried some articles on church affairs, like Methodist Union.²¹ Furthermore, about once a year, the average journal would print the complete sermon of a local clergyman. No decided preference among Protestant groups was evident among the religious subjects published—but there were never any of a Roman Catholic tone. All the editors of this period appear to have had Protestant affiliations. The majority of the reading public, too, were Protestant, as the Catholics were mainly French-speaking half-breeds.

Most of the papers carried jokes as fillers but none of them kept up a consistent policy of publishing a humorous column. The formal jokes were obviously imported "old chestnuts," many of them bearing marks of American origin, such as negro or hillbilly jokes. In the days before telegraph connection made it possible for the *Prince Albert Times* to supply fresh world news, it carried

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, November 29, 1883.

²⁰ See for example the issues of September 23, 1878, and May 17, 1886.

²¹ *Regina Leader*, a series of articles during September, 1883.

more supposedly humorous stories than it did news items, but by 1886 either the editor or the public had over-indulged and it ceased to carry any jokes at all. Some of the jokes provoke a smile today, even though they so obviously belong to another age—"A little girl was seated at the table opposite a gentleman with a waxed moustache. After gazing at him for several minutes, she exclaimed, 'My kitty has got smellers too.'"²² But this was above average and the modern reader would find much more humor in the writing of the local editor than in the patent jokes. The facility of the editors for name-calling, satire and ridicule, was remarkable, especially on political questions. When a Moose Jaw citizen made a verbose denunciation of Regina, the *Leader* headed its rebuttal "Loose Jaw"²³ or when the gentlemen (Members of the North-West Council) who carried the letters M.N.W.C. after their names, were in a paper's bad graces, they became "Miserable Nincompoops Worse Confounded."²⁴ However, the best humor was interspersed through longer editorials and cannot be fully appreciated unless the reader is immersed in the details of Territorial politics.

Sports were an integral part of pioneer life and received adequate coverage in the local papers. In the early years, the scores and names of the participants were reported fully, for all local lacrosse, cricket and especially curling matches. An important part of holidays like May 24, and July 1, was the challenge match between a local and neighboring team in either cricket or lacrosse. After a few of these exchanges had worked up a local interest, the editor usually turned sports commentator and added full reports on the merits of each play.²⁵ The *Prince Albert Times* was the most avid sports paper, publishing complete reports on all athletics plus all the results of the matches of its very active Rifle Shooting Club. The *Leader*, on the other hand, thought sports of such little consequence that on at least two occasions, sports news was inserted a week late "on account of pressure of our space."²⁶

One of the principal features of all papers was the column of short little notes on local news. These breezy little items of a sentence or two covered all the home-town gossip. Arrivals, departures, births, marriages, weather, new buildings, social events past and future, local business and government appointments, and, generally, anything of interest was included, in no special order. This column often saw short little reminders to stir the town to action, like "The day of Jubilee (July 1) is close at hand! How will it be celebrated here?"²⁷ Little blurbs for the papers advertisers were often inserted, as when the *Times* noted, "The Billiard and Pool tables of T. O. Davis arrived on Saturday; no more dull nights for the boys."²⁸ Laurie was the unexcelled master of this art and much of the distinctive charm of the *Herald* lies herein. The Battleford paper's local column contained all the usual comments and in addition noted the movement of game, the dress and comments of visiting Indians, the way the fish were biting or the news that "Mr. Otton and Mr. Laurie have cauliflower heading out," or "Yellowlegged plover were here on the 5th."

²² *Saskatchewan Herald*, May 17, 1886.

²³ *Regina Leader*, April 26, 1883.

²⁴ *Regina Leader*, as quoted in *Qu'Appelle Progress*, December 25, 1885.

²⁵ For example, *Prince Albert Times*, August 5, 1887.

²⁶ *Regina Leader*, August 14, October 16, 1884.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, May 28, 1887.

²⁸ *Prince Albert Times*, December 13, 1882.

Any major event like court cases, death of a prominent citizen, social functions, Town Council meetings, agricultural fairs, school results, or the visit of a dignitary, would receive a special report of its own and not merely be noted in the "Local Chit Chat." The special events would receive considerable coverage, with almost verbatim reports of speeches and often even the banquet menu.

There were two means of gathering information about the other settlements in the Territories. These were exchange papers from the larger town, and local correspondents who wrote in a report every week or so. There was no political discretion in choosing the papers quoted for local news, and there wasn't always political harmony between a paper's editor and his correspondents.²⁹ The number of outside points covered varied widely.³⁰ The usual average was six, consisting of three larger centres, and the others small nearby localities, and often a different set of points on the following week. It does not appear that these correspondents were paid anything for their services, as no papers ever mentioned this although they frequently complained of other expenses, and urged that correspondents write but never accompanied this with the offer of a financial inducement.³¹ Further evidence is furnished by an article in the *Saskatchewan Herald*, which also throws light on the functions of a newspaper in the eyes of the dean of Territorial newspapermen. It urged that all growing settlements make an impartial record of their progress by regularly reporting to the *Herald*, not to earn money, but because "One of the most important functions of a newspaper is the part it plays in placing on record facts and events that become useful to historians in after years . . . [and furthermore] Every settlement has plenty of men quite able and with leisure enough on their hands to keep before the public the progress they are making, from which their advantages may be seen by men looking for new homes."³²

While every journal devoted the majority of its news coverage to North-West affairs, none of them neglected the outside world entirely. However, the amount varied considerably from paper to paper. The *Saskatchewan Herald* customarily carried but one outside dispatch a week and that was usually only from eastern Canada, while the *Qu'Appelle Progress* only spasmodically carried non-prairie news, and that was undated and mixed in with advertisements for banjo strings.³³ The *Leader* and the *Courier* had the best world news coverage, but after 1884, even the *Leader* carried less outside news. The *Courier*, however, continued to display interest in world affairs even during the Riel Rebellion when it devoted almost as much space to the danger of an Anglo-Russian war as to the Rebellion. The rest of the papers were somewhat in between the two extremes, carrying a number of short telegraphic dispatches from eastern Canada, usually one or two on British foreign affairs, and now and then something on American or continental affairs.

²⁹ The York colony correspondent of the *Vidette* was plumping for Davin as a candidate for East Assiniboia, while at the same time the editor was opposing Davin's candidature in even the outside riding of West Assiniboia (*Prince Albert Times*, August 27, 1886).

³⁰ For example, the *Moosomin Courier* usually carried ten and the *Prince Albert Times* sometimes omitted them entirely.

³¹ In a personal interview with T. A. McInnis (son of the late J. K. McInnis, editor of the *Regina Standard*) he stated that the only recompense which regular correspondents received was a complimentary subscription to the newspaper.

³² *Saskatchewan Herald*, July 18, 1881.

³³ *Qu'Appelle Progress*, May 21, 1886.

Letters to the editor were published when received, if they were signed and if their language was inoffensive. Each paper received a large number of letters over the years but there was no steady flow. They were related to every conceivable subject but most commonly were concerned with political or municipal affairs. The letters were well written and indicative of a good general education in the contributors. Sometimes, when there had been a long series of letters on the same subject, the editor would call a halt and refuse to publish any more on that topic.³⁴ At times, the editor's comments on the letters were amusing and often the letters themselves were very interesting. When a letter was received urging that preachers cut the time of their sermons in half, the editor added a simple "Amen."³⁵ One of the most curious letters was that from an Indian chief, who took this means of denying a current report that his tribe was ready to go on the warpath.³⁶ As one of the correspondents commented, letters to the editor of the paper provided a distinct service to the community: "What a boon to a small community is a local journal! What a vent for the instant relief of fancied grievances."³⁷

It was a universal practice to use "boiler plate" articles, which were of no particular Territorial significance, to fill up space. These articles, obviously gleaned from outside sources, were looked down upon by editors, for, while some of them were quite interesting or topical, others like "Making Love in Japan," or "Oath Taking in India," must have made both publisher and reader wince. Most of the material seems to have been originally taken from American magazines, but it was carefully screened so that it was only rarely that any anti-British sentiment³⁸ crept into these staunchly pro-British journals. But while everyone used considerable "boiler plate," the *Regina Journal* was the first paper to use consistently this "patent inside," which was even printed in the East. The *Leader*, *Journal*, *Courier* and *Times* all carried serial novels at various times, none of a very high literary standard, but all very proper and suitable for any member of the family to read. The *Journal's* sub-title to one novel, "A Domestic Story With a Moral," was typical.³⁹

Most of the papers published poems now and then that had a local theme or local author. This desire to print local material sometimes created difficulties, as when an editor had to announce the rejection of an ostensibly locally-composed poem, because he recognized it as being "as old as the hills."⁴⁰ There was also some "boiler plate" poetry but it was rarely of a high quality or of local interest, though it was always very "proper" and usually of British origin.⁴¹ The only other literary endeavor was the *Herald's* book reviews but they had an ulterior motive, for the works reviewed were all being sold by the editor himself.⁴²

³⁴ *Prince Albert Times*, July 22, 1887.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, December 28, 1883.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, March 19, 1886.

³⁷ *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, March 19, 1885.

³⁸ Like the story on the composition of the Star Spangled Banner, *Qu'Appelle Progress*, July 8, 1886.

³⁹ *Regina Journal*, March 24, 1887.

⁴⁰ *Moosomin Courier*, February 12, 1885.

⁴¹ The *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, December 4, 1884, for example, carried poems praising Luther, and attacking Gladstone and the English Liberals.

⁴² *Saskatchewan Herald*, September 9, 1878.

As was natural, these papers showed considerable interest in the Indians, their movements, and their progress in assimilating themselves to agrarian life on the reserves. The *Saskatchewan Herald* understandably devoted a larger proportion of space to the aborigines than did other papers, as it was close to a number of large reserves, and in 1885 it had been given a vivid demonstration of Indian behavior on the warpath. All editors showed a considerable interest in the Red Man before the Rebellion and it was usually of a fairly sympathetic character. The *Qu'Appelle Vidette* gave a detailed description of the "give-away" dance of the local Crees, in which it commented favorably on the liberal distribution of gifts in connection with the dance and suggested that white men could profit by their example.⁴³ After the Rebellion, the number of articles continued to be large, but took a more haughty and derisive tone, except in the case of chiefs like Poundmaker and Crowfoot. The *Prince Albert Times*, in describing the same "give-away" dance, two years later was decidedly unsympathetic, "the boss beggar made the opening address, the leader of the orchestra, all skin and bone, grease and paint, gave the signal, and immediately the air resounded with warwhoops, the music of tomtoms and the kicking of heels, and all went merry as a monkey dance in Central Africa."⁴⁴

It was an established practice to note all the plans, bonuses, legislation and construction progress of railways in the North-West. Especially industrious in this regard were the towns without railways—Prince Albert, Battleford and Fort Qu'Appelle. A recurring subject in all Western newspapers was the report of a governmental committee which investigated the feasibility of a railway to Hudson Bay. Not only was the report itself reprinted, but it was followed up by the comments of statesmen and meetings of settlers, which were favorable to this seemingly vital project.

One of the most common types of content was the reprinting of articles from outside papers and magazines and letters written by settlers regarding the North-West as a field for immigration. A common practice, too, was the reprinting of any favorable eastern comment on the merits of the local paper. Articles on the Territories in general, and the local district in particular were both published, but it never happened that, for instance, a Qu'Appelle paper would reprint an item which gave special praise to the Prince Albert district. However, the *Saskatchewan Herald* published three columns of opinions from the nation's press on Regina's selection as the capital, most of which were highly critical.⁴⁵ The press did sometimes reprint derogatory opinions regarding the Territories in order to refute these misconceptions. The *Prince Albert Times* thought it necessary to publish the menu of a local supper to refute the *London Financier's* opinion "that we have nothing to eat in this Polar Wilderness but a bit of salt pork, a few potatoes (frozen of course) and bread."⁴⁶

The contents of these papers were entirely reading matter, being devoid of any photographs, cartoons or illustrations, except for a few advertisements which sketched their products on the figure of a man. The sole exception to this

⁴³ *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, January 15, 1885.

⁴⁴ *Prince Albert Times*, December 10, 1886.

⁴⁵ *Saskatchewan Herald*, October 14, 1882.

⁴⁶ *Prince Albert Times*, January 31, 1883.

occurred in the federal election of 1887, when the *Qu'Appelle Progress* printed a sketch of a crowing rooster to celebrate the Tory victory, and that of a drooping chicken on behalf of the defeated Grit *Regina Journal*.⁴⁷

Advertising was one of the chief sources of income for the papers and on the average they devoted about half their space to it. In slightly over half the cases the advertisements were those of local merchants, while the remainder were inserted by government bodies, land and railway companies, and the sellers of patent medicine and miscellaneous nationally-sold articles (like baking powder, pianos and Winnipeg or Ontario newspapers and farm journals).⁴⁸ The patent medicine advertisements were all nationally-advertised products making such startling claims as "Consumption Positively Cured," and "Epilepsy Permanently Cured, No Humbug."⁴⁹ The local advertisements often displayed considerable originality in presentation, some being printed at right angles to a page, some being humorous and others being dramatic, as the black headlines which announced "War declared (and in smaller print) against the present high cost of horse-shoeing."⁵⁰ One of the most prolific local advertisers was the paper itself, especially the *Moosomin Courier* which took full page advertisements of its own. Besides regular merchandising advertisements and professional cards there were private ones for strayed animals and the like.

While there was a rough similarity in the contents of all the papers, some of them were distinguishable by the particular subjects which they stressed. Thus the *Saskatchewan Herald* devoted more space to Indian affairs, the *Qu'Appelle Progress* placed its emphasis on temperance articles, and the *Prince Albert Times* peculiar forte was sports and articles designed for consumption by the fair sex. The *Leader's* unique pre-occupation was with Nicholas Flood Davin himself. Not only were all his speeches fully covered but the *Leader* printed a seven and a half column summary of a report by a Chinese immigration commission, seemingly only because Davin had served on it. All of Davin's frequent trips East were given full coverage and in order that the people at Regina might not overlook the sacrifices made by modest N. F. D., he interjected comments like, "I stayed here determined not to leave Ottawa until I had probed things to the very bottom."⁵¹ The *Regina Journal's* hallmark, by contrast, was the savage glee it took in attacking the *Leader* and this idiosyncrasy in particular: "Mr. Davin's name appears eighty-five times in the last issue of the *Leader* and yet the D's did not run short. A personal pronoun is also used to designate this distinguished individual several hundred times in the same issue."⁵²

In examining editorial notes (or "leading articles," as they were sometimes called) the general aims and standards which the writers set for their editorials should be noted. When a paper was founded, it was customary for its first editorial to set forth the policy to be followed. There was a remarkable similarity among all these introductory editorials—all aimed to advocate every measure which

⁴⁷ *Qu'Appelle Progress*, February 24, 1887.

⁴⁸ The number of these ads is an indication that a fair quantity of these outside papers must have circulated in the North-West, in addition to the local ones.

⁴⁹ *Prince Albert Times*, July, 1883.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, March 26, 1886.

⁵¹ *Regina Leader*, March 24, 1884.

⁵² *Regina Journal*, November 26, 1886.

would advance the welfare and development of the North-West and their local district in particular. They all promised to "advocate the cause of right and justice without fear or favor"⁵³ and without any regard to any faction or religious sect. All the papers except the *Regina Journal* and the ephemeral Prince Albert papers claimed to support the Conservative government policy in general, but vigorously proclaimed that they would criticize it if necessary and that they would "give no slavish support to any government."⁵⁴ There was a tendency to make the ability of individuals rather than party politics a criterion, and in regard to North-West Council elections the papers were unanimous that the "ablest man, irrespective of party predilections should be elected."⁵⁵ It was also common to make an allusion to the "sure foundation of British institutions,"⁵⁶ as a standard of judgment.

But these idealistic standards were not the only ones applied by these hard-headed sons of the plains. They all emphasized that the prime need of progressive towns was "a live newspaper to bring the resources and advantages of the district before the public to encourage immigrants of a good class."⁵⁷ To government especially was applied the test of economy, as well as "justice." "Popular government of the simplest and most inexpensive kind is what is wanted in the North-West,"⁵⁸ was a recurring theme. When the *Moosomin Courier* replied to criticism that it was "booming the town" in order to get more printing business, its defence was based upon the practical benefits of this policy, not upon high-sounding principles.⁵⁹ One editor in a frank editorial pointed out that much as independence and honesty of conviction was desirable, it could only be maintained if the public support was sufficient to make the paper solvent and he went on to mention that he had been forced to refuse bribes.⁶⁰ He was probably not the only editor who had to make a choice between profits and honesty, if there is any foundation to the frequent charges which the papers levelled at each other regarding bribery by politicians or the liquor interests. It should be noted, too, that these frugal, practical pioneers were not given to bigotry and idle dreaming. The outlook of the newspapers and their patrons was neatly summed up by an editorial which stated, "As a rule people in the North-West bother themselves very little about their neighbor's religion. All they ask is one hundred cents in the dollar and a fair field for every man."⁶¹

At least seventy-five per cent of the subject matter of editorials related directly to the Territories and the remainder was devoted to national, British

⁵³ *Moosomin Courier*, October 9, 1884.

⁵⁴ *Prince Albert Times*, November 1, 1882.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, October 29, 1886.

⁵⁶ *Qu'Appelle Progress*, November 13, 1885.

⁵⁷ *Prince Albert Times*, November 1, 1882.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, October 29, 1886. See also *Qu'Appelle Progress*, November 27, 1885, and *Regina Journal*, May 19, 1887.

⁵⁹ The *Courier's* campaign had been the means of securing a district court seat for Moosomin, and any increased business transactions of the paper meant the circulation of more capital through the town, the editor claimed. *Moosomin Courier*, November 12, 1885.

⁶⁰ *Prince Albert Times*, June 19, 1885.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, October 29, 1886. This is similar to the view expressed by a contemporary, non-newspaper writer, "There is very little ideal sentiment in the North-West at the present time . . . Up to this (time) the labor has been great and the reward small and little blame to the Western pioneer, who should regard a shower of rain or a fine wheat field with greater interest than the fanfaronade of some puritanical spouter who comes out West with sentiment in one hand and emptiness in the other." J. W. Powers, *History of Regina* (Regina, 1887), p. 31.

and American politics and miscellaneous topics, in that order of frequency. The Territorial subjects were about equally divided between strictly local affairs and those of more general interest. The local editorials were usually suggestions or demands for urban improvements like the erection of sidewalks, sending grain samples to eastern fairs, or demanding government aid in exterminating gophers. Nor did the papers shrink from giving the whole town a verbal lacing for such things as poor attendance at school board meetings.⁶² The more general comments were predominantly concerned with the actions of North-West Councilmen, Western Members of Parliament, Indians, prohibition, and immigration. Sometimes the notes in the editorial column only called attention to events, without expressing any opinion on them.

There was an amazing unanimity of view on a number of subjects. All papers had a lot to say about the need for immigrants, especially from Britain, their dislike of colonization companies, their praise of the personal characters of Sir John A. Macdonald⁶³ and Thomas White,⁶⁴ the importance of railways, agricultural fairs,⁶⁵ and North-West representation in the Dominion Parliament and cabinet,⁶⁶ the seriousness of prairie fires, the necessity for Riel's hanging, and the rosy future ahead of the Territories. It was also a fairly frequent custom to make a review of the year's events the subject of an editorial at New Year's.

The editorials on national affairs were almost always of a political nature. There were occasional editorials on internal British politics (home-rule being the favorite), and British foreign affairs, most of which expressed unequivocal approval of the current British policy.⁶⁷ Presidential elections and Anglo-American disputes were the favorite American topics and had a definite anti-Yankee tinge. The editorials on British affairs were comprehensive and intelligent on the whole and better than those on the American scene.

The miscellaneous "leaders" were most commonly on Christianity or morality and on Robert Burns every January. There was the odd frivolous editorial such as "On Proposing to Girls"⁶⁸ but they were exceedingly rare. The lack of cultural subjects does not seem to be due to the editor's fear of tackling the subject but simply because such impractical matter had no place in the bustling West.

⁶² *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, November 10, 1887.

⁶³ They did not, however, always praise the political policies. Thus one paper, in the same issue which praised Macdonald as "Canada's greatest statesman," also voiced approval of the Moosomin Settlers Union demands for (1) the cessation of land grants to colonization companies (2) more grants to feeder railways (3) immediate construction of the Hudson Bay railway (4) eight North-West members for the Commons and Senate (5) one local government for the Territories (6) amendment of the timber regulations and (7) recognition of the half-breed claims, as was done in Manitoba in 1870. (These, except (5), were all contrary to Macdonald's policy). *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, December 18, 1884.

⁶⁴ Minister of the Interior (1885-1888).

⁶⁵ Every editor supported these fairs, because, as the editors pointed out, they were an excellent advertisement of the region's fertility and thus would attract immigration.

⁶⁶ Most papers also advocated local self-government for the North-West but they disagreed as to what form it should take and how soon it was needed. They were not "frontier democrats," however, because the *Regina Leader*, *Saskatchewan Herald* and *Qu'Appelle Vidette* were all strongly opposed to manhood suffrage. They advocated the retention of the existing property qualifications in order to exclude the "bummer element." *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, January 6, 1887.

⁶⁷ An exception to this was an interesting series of editorials on "Great Britain's Future," which blamed free trade for the current economic depression and advocated Empire Federation, or alternatively, an Imperial protective tariff as the solution. *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, December 4, 11, 1884.

⁶⁸ *Regina Leader*, November 8, 1883.

Mr. Davin did make several attempts to introduce a cultural note into his editorials but the more typical Western attitude was the *Prince Albert Times'* dismissal of the Oscar Wilde-inspired aesthetic craze in America, with the comment that Wilde had made a lot of money and the American people "have made egregious asses of themselves."⁶⁹ Possessing this attitude, most editors simply ignored such things.

The favorite editorial mood was aggressiveness—attacking political misdeeds, trumpeting a grievance, or demanding some specific action; but editorials could also be commendatory or instructive. The most common time for praiseful editorizing was just before an election when the subject was their party's local candidate. However, they did on occasion give credit where it was due, without any ulterior motive, as when the *Leader* commended the improved discipline of the Mounted Police because "the same principle of loyalty to the public which made us comment adversely on the police when they did wrong, impels us to praise them when they do right."⁷⁰ More frequently the editorials were of a valuable informative character like Laurie's advice as to what garden vegetables could be grown successfully in the North-West,⁷¹ and the *Times'* discussion of the advantages and possibilities of cattle raising.⁷² The *Saskatchewan Herald* was the most conscientious distributor of useful information, even attempting editorially, at one time, to analyze the causes of a current epidemic, describing its symptoms and urging early consultation with a doctor.⁷³

Rivalry with contemporary publications provided a constant stimulus for editorial writers. This subject has been referred to previously but it was so frequent, so colorful, and so distinctive a part of editorial writing that it deserves further attention. All of the papers participated in verbal disputes, but there was considerable variation as to the amount of wrangling which was indulged in and the spirit in which it was done. The *Saskatchewan Herald* was the most moderate in this regard and the *Qu'Appelle* papers the most constant and bitter.

There were different styles of writing used to express this rivalry. "For consummate and bare-faced lying, commend us to the present editor of the *Regina Leader*,"⁷⁴ said the *Qu'Appelle Progress* in blunt forthright prose. The *Regina Journal* excelled at humorous ridicule, saying "The only paper Mr. Davin has to support him is the wheezy old bellows he pumps himself," or "The *Moosomin Courier* has apparently offered itself as a candidate for initiation into the North-West Division of the Ancient Order of Boodle Twisters, of which the *Regina Leader* is Right Worthy Grand Twister and the *Qu'Appelle Progress* Deputy Grand."⁷⁵ The *Prince Albert Times* was the most effective exponent of studied sarcasm, greeting the prospectus of the *Regina Journal* thus, "Regina is to be saved! A man with a mission is about to pitch his tent within the limits of this modern Sodom and its sinners are to be regenerated by a liberal sprinkling

⁶⁹ *Prince Albert Times*, February 7, 1883.

⁷⁰ *Regina Leader*, October 25, 1883.

⁷¹ *Saskatchewan Herald*, October 21, 1878.

⁷² *Prince Albert Times*, June 6, 1883.

⁷³ *Saskatchewan Herald*, November 8, 1886.

⁷⁴ *Qu'Appelle Progress*, cited in *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, August 11, 1887.

⁷⁵ *Regina Journal*, February 3, 1887 and February 10, 1887.

of those pure and reviving waters which ever flow from the Grit fountain."⁷⁶ But, when the *Regina Leader* went so far as to say "Out of hell, anything viler than an article in the (Toronto) *Globe*, it would be hard to find," Laurie, the dean of Territorial journalists called a halt and asked, "Was it the *Leader* that suggested a strict adherence to truth and the cultivation of courtesy between editors?" Laurie's paper itself very seldom indulged in this rivalry, and when it did, it was usually to poke gentle fun, "If [the *Leader*] is honest in this belief its faith is broad enough to accept the fish stories told on the banks of the Wascana."⁷⁷

Colorful, vigorous, bold and hyperbolic style was exhibited in much of the editorial writing. There was no mincing of words when they protested against "men armed with the monstrous, extraordinary, abnormal and utterly unconstitutional (when combined) powers of Police Officers and Civil Magistrates,"⁷⁸ or labelled their political opponents "whiskey-inspired ribald hucksters of calumny,"⁷⁹ or spoke of a "man in whom colossal malignity is united with a soul so small that it would find infinite room in the bladder of an undergrown flea."⁸⁰ The fine art of vituperation was also brought to play against the Dominion Government and its Territorial appointees, when the Lieutenant Governor could be described as "The Big man of little soul and less conscience from Regina,"⁸¹ or Assiniboia as "a pasture field to accommodate a foreign power to recuperate dilapidated politicians."⁸² Elections usually brought forth the most abusive language, even in municipal and North-West Council elections, as when a paper announced "the time has come for our useless municipal council to give up the seals of office."⁸³ An outspoken commentary on the election for the Qu'Appelle seat on the North-West Council throws an interesting side-light on electioneering methods, "The people are to be congratulated for the reason that the briber and whiskey peddler were not successful in carrying the election."⁸⁴ But there were exceptional cases when a paper would say, "Let us treat Mr. Laird with respect but vote for Mr. Macdowall."⁸⁵

The editorials of this period were not lacking in boldness. One paper attacked General Middleton and his Indian policy,⁸⁶ another, implement manufacturers who "have been bleeding the pioneers by extortionate prices,"⁸⁷ while a third castigated Mounted Police officials and local houses of ill-repute.⁸⁸ The *Courier* was bold enough to take its home town to task, and urge that it take action to become "a credit instead of a disgrace to the Territories."⁸⁹ But the *Times* was undoubtedly the boldest, warning the government on several occasions prior to the Rebellion, "We are bound to obtain a redress amiably and peacefully if possible—but we are bound to have it anyway."⁹⁰

⁷⁶ *Prince Albert Times*, September 17, 1886.

⁷⁷ *Saskatchewan Herald*, September 27, 1886.

⁷⁸ *Prince Albert Times*, April 25, 1884.

⁷⁹ *Regina Leader*, as cited in *Regina Journal*, March 3, 1887.

⁸⁰ *Regina Leader*, July 31, 1885.

⁸¹ *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, February 11, 1886.

⁸² *Moosomin Courier*, June 11, 1885.

⁸³ *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, July 14, 1887.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, October 21, 1886.

⁸⁵ *Prince Albert Times*, February 4, 1887; also see *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, January 13, 1887.

⁸⁶ *Saskatchewan Herald*, March 22, 1886.

⁸⁷ *Qu'Appelle Progress*, January 8, 1886.

⁸⁸ *Regina Leader*, August 30, 1883 and May 17, 1883.

⁸⁹ *Moosomin Courier*, March 5, 1885.

⁹⁰ *Prince Albert Times*, October 10, 1883 and May 16, 1884.

The tendency to over-state their case dramatically meant that the editorials were not always strictly accurate. However, they were always built around a kernel of truth, and those on non-political subjects were usually quite exact. When discussing crop failures and "evil days," the papers thought honesty was the best policy, despite any discouraging effect it might have on immigration because the North-West "only wants immigrants who are prepared to meet some adversity."⁹¹ Even in this regard the papers were not completely consistent, for no one but a Regina resident can appreciate the degree to which Davin exercised poetic license when he wrote, "What is perfectly clear is this, that we [in Regina] shall never have anything like the mud which makes walking so unpleasant in Winnipeg."⁹²

While no attempt has here been made to measure the social influence of pioneer journalism in Saskatchewan, one must at least conclude that the editors labored energetically and imaginatively to bring to fruition the boundless possibilities of development which they envisioned for their beloved North-West. Their labors must have contributed much to entertaining their readers, relieving their ignorance of current affairs, fostering community spirit, counteracting pessimism, attracting settlement, and stimulating political consciousness. The papers may have taken an abnormal interest in politics, become wearisome in their glowing descriptions of local settlement attractions, and published biased reports and editorials, but they did so largely with the object of furthering the advance of the West. The editors were not of course motivated solely by altruistic desires, but, nevertheless, they were not afraid to take bold stands, and the evidence is clear that the majority had little reward, other than the knowledge that they were helping lay broad and deep the foundations of their land's future greatness. As an anonymous Winnipeg writer said near the end of the Territorial period,

"Among the contributing factors to Western development may be recorded the influence of the Western Canadian Press. In this vast country the printer came hand in hand with the pioneer. The debt of gratitude the West owes to its press has never been sufficiently acknowledged or appreciated. With tireless vigilance and unfaltering loyalty the men who controlled the organs of publicity have toiled always with zeal and nearly always with discretion, for the welfare of their district and their country."⁹³

EARL G. DRAKE

⁹¹ *Prince Albert Times*, October 17, 1884.

⁹² *Regina Leader*, April 19, 1883.

⁹³ *Saskatchewan Herald*, September 14, 1904.

AN EARLY CO-OPERATIVE

The Saskatchewan Purchasing Company

PERHAPS the earliest venture in general co-operative retailing on a large scale in Western Canada was made by the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company, established in 1910 with head office in Broadview. At the crest of expansion it operated fourteen branch stores and boasted a shareholding membership of more than six hundred people. The great body of support came from farmers and railwaymen. The venture collapsed in 1913, and while the collapse was complete the experience gained undoubtedly influenced the course of co-operative legislation and practice in the ensuing years. This early essay in co-operation is attributable to a combination of factors not least of which was the prevailing agrarian discontent. Bankers, businessmen, railway and elevator companies were all viewed with suspicion by farmers. The failure of the project was due to lack of experience in financing and in merchandising, as well as to the hostility of organized private business. Those who promoted the venture most strongly and who lost heavily in the failure feel that, this experience notwithstanding, their faith in co-operative principles has been vindicated by history.

Broadview is a divisional point on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Like Moosomin, Whitewood, Grenfell, and a number of other towns in the southern part of the province, it was founded in 1882, the year of the coming of the railway. The farming area tributary to Broadview was settled early, in the main by English immigrants, some of whom were familiar with the Rochdale principles of consumer co-operation. With other agricultural districts the community experienced the exasperation and unrest common to the West in the first decade of this century. The same conditions which nurtured the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company and the United Grain Growers as producers' co-operatives were responsible for the organization of the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company. In the words of one of the leaders of the project, "The reasons for the forming of this Company were varied, but in the main they centred around the autocratic methods adopted by the railroads, elevator companies, and big and little business concerns during the years prior to the formation of the Company."¹ It is significant, too, that Broadview was a railway town and that railway men were paid in cash. Discontent could simmer verbally for a long time—there was a reservoir of cash to encourage overt action in Broadview.

The project of setting up a retail outlet was widely discussed during the fall of 1909. After preliminary meetings concerted action was taken in Broadview on February 25, 1910. On that date the articles of association of the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company² were drawn up. On the following day these, together

¹ Letter of D. McNeil, Broadview, to the writer, reporting the views of his father, Mr. John McNeil. The resentment building up against local business concerns proved a windfall to mail order houses. The volume of business diverted to these houses was so great that the Whitewood *Herald*, to quote just one paper, took people to task in an editorial of October 30, 1913, for failing to support local merchants.

² The name, Saskatchewan Purchasing Company, envisaged a province-wide business.

with a memorandum of association, signed by Arthur Porter, editor, M. G. Collins, engineer, and G. Robinson, lumberman, and witnessed by H. W. MacDonald, barrister, all of Broadview, were forwarded to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies in Regina.³ The Company was incorporated as a limited joint stock company on February 28, 1910.⁴

It must be remembered that at this time there was no co-operative association act on the statute books of Saskatchewan and the objects of this company would have to conform to the provisions of the Companies Act. The articles of association made provision for the sale of shares of one hundred dollar denomination up to an authorized capital of one million dollars. No shares were to be allotted unless the application was accompanied by a payment of at least twenty-five per cent of their par value and no individual could hold at one time more than one hundred shares. In addition, the articles set out policy for the administration of the Company. The directors, whose number, powers and term of office were defined, were given wide administrative powers. Voting procedure (later changed) was one share, one vote, and voting by proxy was permitted. The declaring of dividends was left to the will of the general annual meeting. The directors were given the privilege of commencing business as soon as one thousand dollars had been paid in on shares. The objects of the proposed concern, twenty-two in number, were such as might have been subscribed to by any private business interested in general retail trade. These made provision for the handling of lumber, coal, dry goods, farm implements, etc., and specifically provided for the manufacture and sale of flour and feed. Nowhere in either articles or memorandum was there any suggestion of intent to set up a co-operative project, though this intent was soon made manifest.

The plans for the business called for a commodious physical plant. The secretary, H. W. MacDonald, arranged the purchase of four lots from the C.P.R. at a price of two hundred and twenty-five dollars.⁵ It was decided to build a two-storey building, to be constructed of bricks manufactured in the Broadview Brick Works.⁶

After the incorporation of the Company, promotional work got under way in earnest. The directors entered into a contract with W. J. Crowe and V. E. Tanner on March 10, 1910 whereby these gentlemen undertook the sale of stock at a commission of ten per cent.⁷ They were granted exclusive rights of sale. The policy of demanding a down payment of only twenty-five per cent on shares with

³ Saskatchewan Purchasing Company file in the office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Regina, hereafter referred to as Registrar's File. Other chief sources used in this article are: office file of H. W. MacDonald, Barrister, Broadview, relating to small debt actions, Dominion Trust Company vs. Fallis and Dominion Trust Company vs. Mountney, hereafter referred to as MacDonald File; correspondence between J. M. Hill and Honourable J. A. Calder relating to the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company, in Calder Papers, Archives of Saskatchewan, hereafter referred to as Calder Papers; records of small debt actions—Dominion Trust Company vs. Fallis and Dominion Trust Company vs. Mountney, in Court House, Moosomin, hereafter referred to by name of case.

⁴ *Saskatchewan Gazette*, March 15, 1910. The prospectus was filed with the Registrar on May 18, 1910. Clause seventeen of the prospectus was amended May 28th but the change was a mere matter of wording.

⁵ Registrar's File: Crowe to Registrar, May 10, 1910.

⁶ *Broadview: The Railway Town of Eastern Saskatchewan*, (Broadview, 1913). This booklet gives a description with illustrations of the brick plant.

⁷ Registrar's File: Crowe to Registrar, May 10, 1910.

a ten per cent sales commission was certain to leave the Company embarrassed for cash, since the money realized at the outset on each hundred dollars would be only fifteen dollars. It was an ominous beginning for the business. It was probably a mistake, as well, to grant exclusive rights for sale of shares to two non-farmers who were unfamiliar with the rural areas. Crowe found it necessary to engage Mr. Joseph Bird, a farmer of the Broadview district, to drive him around the country side. Mr. Bird, though not a supporter of the project, knew the settlers for miles around. Crowe and Tanner may have been enterprising businessmen but it takes more than a business reputation to sell a project to farmers already suspicious of the machinations of business concerns. In the early stages the Company was not able to capitalize fully on the undoubted reservoir of support which existed for the project.

While the formal sale of shares was going on, much informal promotional work was done. Railwaymen living in Broadview and travelling the main line proved to be excellent emissaries to adjacent towns. It is interesting to note that whereas the official sellers of shares stressed the business aspect the unofficial promoters publicized the co-operative intent. That supporters of the Company envisaged a co-operative concern is clearly shown in an advertisement which appeared in the *Prairie Witness*, (Indian Head) on April 21, 1910. This page length, three column advertisement ran in part as follows:

Now is the time to subscribe for stock in the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association. This is the greatest organization ever formed in the province, and its formation is the result of stern economic conditions which are oppressing the consumer. You should subscribe for stock in this Company because—

The amount of our capital gives a buying power over any and all of the smaller concerns

There is no promotion stock so that each and every one pays the same price with special favours to none

No shares are being paid up by the acquisition of property

There are no bad debts—the man who buys from us will not have to pay for the other fellow

It is time something was done to save you from exorbitant prices

The shares of the Company will be widely distributed and placed in the hands of people who will bring business to the Company

Twenty-five dollars per share on application and not more than ten per cent per annum till fully paid.

This advertisement, appearing without names of directors or officers, contravened the Companies ordinance.⁸ Crowe was able to explain that the appearance of such an advertisement at that time was unauthorized. The legality of the action is of little moment. What is significant is the use of the caption *Saskatchewan Co-operative Association* and the reasons given for supporting such a concern.

The spring and summer of 1910 brought a steadily increasing number of applications for shares. On May 10th there were twenty-one applicants—fourteen

⁸ Registrar's File: The attention of the government was drawn to this in a letter from Mr. O. J. Godfrey, C.A., of Indian Head.

from the Broadview district; by July 5th, the total was fifty-five with thirty applicants from the Broadview district; by October 24th, one hundred and two people had applied for shares—Broadview district led with thirty-nine.⁹ On August 2nd, W. J. Crowe made a sworn declaration that five thousand dollars worth of shares had been allotted, that twenty-five per cent of the shares value had been paid up, and that each director had each paid twenty-five per cent on shares in his name. A certificate granting the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company the right to begin business was accordingly granted on August 8, 1910.¹⁰ The sale of shares went on without slackening.

The first annual meeting of shareholders of the Company was held in the Broadview Agricultural Hall in the afternoon of January 10, 1911.¹¹ Discussion centred around the method of selling shares and a motion was passed "That the present system of selling stock, be rescinded, and in future all settlements for stock be as follows—twenty-five per cent cash, balance by note for twelve months (without interest) with commission of three per cent on stock sold by agents." A full slate of directors was elected. Neither Crowe nor Tanner was included in the list. The final item on the agenda brought discussion on methods of voting and on division of profits. The debate on this last item was not resolved and the advice of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies was solicited on whether the Company could make internal decisions on disposition of profits and on voting procedure. The Registrar in reply referred the Company officials to a solicitor, claiming the questions to be of a purely legal nature. Apparently the legality of procedure was established for at a meeting of the Company shareholders held in Broadview on April 4th, direct action was taken. Bylaw No. 4 was read and passed. It ran:

Whereas it has been deemed expedient that a bylaw should be passed regulating the voting powers of shareholders, and division of profits accruing from the business, now, therefore, be it enacted:—

1. That no person, firm or corporation can have more than one vote.
2. That purchase dividends be paid to members as well as a flat rate of interest on subscribed capital and that a one-half dividend be paid to non-shareholders.¹²

The regulation establishing the one person-one vote policy was significant. It marked clearly the will of the shareholders to operate under co-operative principles.

Meanwhile the business done by the Company was expanding. In the spring of 1911 a branch store opened in Percival. Bitter internal squabbles over management were frequent, however, since enthusiasm and confidence were a poor

⁹ Registrar's File: Letters Crowe to Registrar May 10, July 5, October 24, 1910. The full report was: May 10—Twenty-one shareholders, with Broadview fourteen, Sinaluta three, and Whitewood, Grenfell, Hillsden and Fitzmaurice one each. July 5—Fifty-five shareholders (eighty-six shares) with Broadview thirty, Kipling six, Sinaluta three, Hillsden, Bender, Percival and Whitewood two each and Grenfell and Summerberry one each. October 24—one hundred and two shareholders and one hundred and forty-three shares (Broadview, thirty-nine shareholders).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Crowe to Registrar, August 2, Registrar to Crowe, August 8. The Company put in merchandise a little later. The new store was not completed until still later.

¹¹ M. G. Collins, President and H. W. MacDonald, Secretary. Information on this first meeting was found in Registrar's File.

¹² *Ibid.*

substitute for experience. In May of that year the directors decided to hire a general manager. The man chosen was James M. Hill, an Englishman, experienced in secretarial work, a believer in co-operative principles, and a fair public speaker.¹³ In the light of their recent experiences it is not surprising that the directors were willing to give Hill almost a free hand in the day to day administration of the Company's affairs.

Under the new management the business, and the number of branches, expanded rapidly. A letter of June 26, 1911 bears the heading: "Saskatchewan Purchasing Company Limited (authorized capital, \$1,000,000) Farmers' and General Co-operative Society (affiliated with the Co-operative Union of Canada) Dealers in Farm Machinery, Harness and Hardware, Dry Goods, Boots and Shoes, Groceries, etc."¹⁴ A letterhead of September 27, 1911 is the same but "Binder twine, Buggies and Lumber" had been added to the list of commodities. As of December 9, 1912 the list of branches read: Red Jacket, Whitewood, St. Hubert, Percival, Grenfell, Qu'Appelle, Moose Jaw, Dubuc, Vibank, Kipling, etc. By February 17, 1913, Wapella, Wawota and Welwyn branches had been added. As of October 16, 1913 the letterhead noted that there was a "Drug department in charge of fully qualified chemist in connection with Broadview store."¹⁵

During the same period the increase in the number of shareholders was equally noteworthy. As of October 15, 1911 there were two hundred and twenty-five shareholders holding two hundred and seventy-three shares. The area of support was widening for while Broadview led with sixty-one shareholders, Whitewood had thirty-six, Grenfell thirty, and Kipling seventeen, with the remainder from Sintaluta, Percival, Windthorst, Summerberry, Hillsden, Bender, Fitzmaurice, Moose Jaw, Forest Farm and St. Hubert. By December 31, 1912 the number of shareholders was four hundred and thirty-eight. Quite significant is the shift in support, for Broadview had dropped to forty-seven while Wawota led with fifty-three, Wapella had fifty, Vibank thirty-seven, Red Jacket twenty-four, with fresh supporters from Brandon, Stockholm, Qu'Appelle and Dubuc. In a letter of February 10, 1913, H. W. MacDonald stated that the number of shareholders was "in the neighbourhood of six hundred."¹⁶

In the early phase of this expansion the Company appeared to be on a sound basis. The balance sheet as audited by O. J. Godfrey, C.A., covering the period December 1, 1910 to December 30, 1911 showed a loss in operations up to December 1, 1910 of \$991.53 but a profit since of \$1,238.31, and an overall net profit since the business opened of \$246.78. An extract from the report reads:

¹³ James M. Hill had been private secretary to a Member of Parliament in England and was a contributor to the *Manchester Guardian* and other papers. Illness in the family and a doctor's advice to move to Canada induced him to accept the position of manager and secretary of the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company.

¹⁴ Calder Papers: Letters of J. M. Hill to Honourable J. A. Calder on dates indicated. Also Registrar's File.

¹⁵ As a matter of local interest Miss Edith Hall was the druggist. The Broadview store had, in addition to the manager and druggist, a staff of three.

¹⁶ Registrar's File: In Calder Papers in a letter from Hill to Calder enclosing financial statement for Company as of December 31, 1912, it is stated that applications for stores had been received from Star City, Prince Albert, Melfort, Tisdale, Balcarres, Nituna, Fairlight, Langbank, Maryfield, Rivers, Bengough, Willowbunch and Deanton.

I am glad to be able to report a far more satisfactory state of affairs than hitherto, and the loss incurred prior to my audit of December, 1910 has been turned into a profit. As there was a net loss of \$145.25 to the end of May last for the period then covered, it follows that for the last seven months a profit of \$1,383.59 has been made, which is highly satisfactory considering that your object is not so much to make profit, as to save your members and customers money in their purchases.¹⁷

This was most encouraging, as was the record of 1912. While the affairs of the Company did appear to be more and more identified with J. M. Hill, Manager, and less and less with directors' and general meetings, the financial statement for December 31, 1912 showed assets of \$98,891.73 with \$23,000 paid up and a margin of \$8,691.73.¹⁸

Behind the cheering reports of surpluses and margins, however, there was a serious weakness. The Company, with no adequate cash reserve, was attempting to carry a policy of expansion. To do this it had either to borrow outside capital or obtain money by further calls on stock. Expansion meant also that the cash reserve remained dangerously low. The year 1913 was one of great financial stringency across Canada and the drastic tightening of credit at once brought the Company into difficulties—and finally to ruin. The first warnings of serious trouble came early in 1913 when wholesale houses called in outstanding accounts and refused to allow more time. Borrowing was now necessary for survival, quite apart from expansion. But the banks refused to loan money on the security of farmers' notes and writs began to come in to the head office.

The Company did not go down to defeat without a struggle. During the whole of 1913 Hill was negotiating with banks, pleading with farmers, fencing with wholesale houses and corresponding with officials of the provincial government in an effort to fend off the day of cash reckoning. His chief efforts took the form of pleas to the Honorable J. A. Calder, Provincial Treasurer, importuning him to use influence to get money houses to advance money to the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company on "gilt edge security."¹⁹ On May 15th, Hill confided to Mr. Calder that fifteen hundred dollars was needed "to hold the fort until June 7." On June 7th, he requested Calder to take up the matter with the Premier stating that two thousand dollars was needed by June 12th. On June 13th he wrote again emphasizing the offers of people, not "friends" of the government, to help him. The request this time was for five thousand dollars to tide the Company over until December when shareholders' notes came due. In all these letters he acknowledged Mr. Calder's personal interest in co-operative principles and asked him, as Provincial Treasurer, to use the influence of his office to get lending houses to advance money on the good security the Company could offer. He emphasized the part played by the "interests" in the Company's trouble. It was to no avail, for on June 17th he received the following message from Mr. Calder:

¹⁷ Registrar's File: Hill to Registrar, January 30, 1912. The same letter informs the Registrar that T. Miskman had resigned as President and that John McNeil had been elected to succeed him.

¹⁸ Calder Papers: Hill to Calder, May 15, 1913.

¹⁹ Calder Papers: Correspondence from May 15 to December 5, 1913, is almost wholly given over to pleas for help by Hill and expressions of regret by Calder. Hill, in desperation, frequently brings up the possibility of the "other side" helping him. The reference is to the Conservative Party.

I am exceedingly sorry that all my efforts have been without result and as you need immediate assistance would suggest you take any course open to you. I don't see any other solution to your problem.²⁰

Certain of the directors, most earnest in their support of the project, had given personal guarantees to outstanding indebtedness, as had the manager. This enabled the Company to carry on during the summer. Hill then turned to the shareholders asking that notes be paid in July rather than December. In a general letter to shareholders of July 21, 1913, he called a meeting for July 24 to authorize this procedure, stating:

It seems to me to be the most feasible manner of surmounting the situation which has been created by the frantic efforts of certain "interests" to render co-operative trading impossible in this Province. I may remind you in passing that we shall prevent a recurrence of the bitter experience of the past few months by inaugurating this Fall a Co-operative Wholesale Department from which all our branch stores will be supplied.²¹

The response, however, was only lukewarm.

There is nothing so disastrous in business as to lose the confidence of suppliers and supporters. Rumours that the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company was "hard up" were freely circulated during the summer and fall of 1913.²² Shareholders began to lose confidence, while wholesale houses called in advances. The situation deteriorated still further and finally an extraordinary general meeting of shareholders was called for November 24th in order to "present a statement of the affairs of the Company and to determine whether the business shall be continued or not." This was an ominous note, but the remainder was more optimistic: "A long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together will mean victory. The general manager will waive his claim against the Company for cash advanced (to which reference will be made at the meeting) if the shareholders will rally up."²³ But before this meeting could be convened the Company made an assignment to the Dominion Trust Company, an action ratified at a meeting of directors of the Company held in Broadview on November 24, 1913.²⁴

There was a marked bitterness felt by supporters over the collapse of their Company. Some individuals blamed the management, or more particularly the manager; others blamed the directors. In the main, however, blame for the Company's failure was attributed to the machinations of private business concerns and banks, while it was generally accepted that there had been lack of experience and some mismanagement. The overall popular view appears to have been that while the experiment had failed, the principles involved were by no means discredited.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Calder did approach the heads of various banking concerns but with no success.

²¹ Dominion Trust Company vs. W. R. Fallis: letter submitted as evidence.

²² Calder Papers: Hill to Calder, December 5, 1913. Hill states that such reports were spread deliberately by "the baser kind of traveller".

²³ Dominion Trust Company vs. W. R. Fallis: notice of meeting submitted as evidence.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Minutes of directors' meeting, November 24, 1913, submitted as evidence. There was a legal aftermath to the Company's collapse. Hill and three directors had given personal guarantees to some accounts and were accordingly legally responsible. The settlement made was never publicized but it seems certain that these Company officials sustained considerable financial loss. The Dominion Trust Company took legal action in two test cases (Dominion Trust Company vs. W. R. Fallis, and Dominion Trust Company vs. J. B. Mountney) in an attempt to collect outstanding amounts on promissory notes signed for the purchase of shares, but failed to secure a favourable decision.

Hill, who knew more of the inner secrets of the Company than anyone else, in a private letter to the editor of the *Grain Growers Guide* set out the reasons for the failure of the Company.²⁵ He condemned the early arrangement for selling stock as being "absolutely indefensible," and also pointed out that the agreements with purchasers were not negotiable instruments. An additional difficulty was that shares had been sold at Grenfell, Dubuc and Bender, "on the distinct understanding that stores should be started at these points, and subscribers demanded fulfillment of the undertaking or return of notes." The only honourable course, Hill felt, was to open branches, provided always that the district presented a good case for a co-operative store. Hill goes on to lay the chief blame on what he calls the "interests." When the Company threatened to become a "power in the land" then "the edict went forth that since our continuance would prove a menace to the Retail Trade, we must be destroyed." The first blow came when notes for forty-eight hundred dollars and sixty-five hundred dollars from Welwyn and Wawota were lodged with the banks and stocks put in. "But the bank refused to make any advance whatever on these notes; and since there was no cash reserve to fall back upon, the situation became acute." He adds: "We have indisputable evidence that the retailers in the towns we had tapped brought pressure to bear upon certain Wholesale Houses, who either stopped our credit entirely or insisted upon very short dating." Hill stated that not only were there no cash reserves, but farmers had no cash as banks refused credit to them. The Company then had to accept large quantities of butter, eggs, etc. The Company's stores were poorly stocked due to credit being limited, and this created dissatisfaction among the shareholders.

The last paragraph of Hill's letter contains some acid comments on his experience with farmers, "After an experience covering two years and a half I am forced to the conclusion that the average Western farmer (there are glorious exceptions) is only a co-operator to the extent that co-operation becomes an aid to his worship of the almighty dollar. With many commendable traits in his character—on the farm most businesslike—yet when he enters the arena of ordinary commercial life he becomes singularly suspicious and selfish. Incapable of acting disinterestedly himself, he is utterly dead to the true co-operative spirit; of ethical co-operation he knows nothing; and his regard for practical co-operation is measured only by his ability to purchase [at] a co-operative store five cents cheaper than he can elsewhere." He concludes his letter as follows:

I therefore attribute the fall (from which we will rise) to four prime causes:

1. Starting on a bad foundation (no cash reserves).
2. The absurd and indefensible attitude of banks towards farmers' notes this year.
3. The sinister influence of the retail trade on wholesalers.
4. Disloyalty of farmers to their own highest interests.

Hill was undoubtedly correct when he stated that a weak foundation contributed to the failure of the Company. Without a cash reserve it was forced to borrow money to put in stock. On the other hand, in spite of this handicap, the

²⁵ Copy in Calder Papers.

Broadview store was able to show a profit of \$1,383.59 during the last seven months of 1911. While operating one store the business appeared to be sound.

The "paper" basis of the Company affected adversely the credit standing with financial houses. Hill had had much experience with promissory notes and loans, and undoubtedly the attitude of the banks in refusing advances on farmers' notes exasperated him. However, it is highly unlikely that the banks refused money for the sole purpose of blocking the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company. The year 1913 brought a general drastic tightening of credit restrictions. The fact that the Regina manager of the Canadian Bank of Commerce would turn down a loan requested by the Company, in the full knowledge that members of the Provincial Government had a genuine concern for the Company, is proof enough that money was refused as a matter of general policy rather than personal bias.²⁶ Farmers all over the West were pinched for cash—the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company could hardly expect to borrow further on farmers' notes when farmers could not borrow money firsthand. The policy of the banks may well have been open to criticism but not on the grounds that it discriminated specifically against the Company.

In speaking of the "sinister influence" of the retail trade on wholesalers Hill voiced sentiments popularly held. He mentions the "interests" who set out to crush this first large co-operative venture in Saskatchewan, and there is evidence that retail houses made conditions unduly difficult. In a letter to Honourable J. A. Calder, May 17, 1913, Hill quotes a passage from a circular of the Co-operative Union of Canada, dated May 10, 1913:

At the recent convention of the Retail Merchants' Association it was, I understand, decided to use the united influence of its members to prevent wholesale houses supplying co-operative societies with merchandise . . .²⁷

The *Grain Growers Guide* in its issue of July 6, 1913, commented editorially on what it stated to be a "determined, organized effort to crush co-operation and to raise the price of necessities in Canada":

The Brockville, Ontario, Co-operative Society has had its orders refused by three wholesale houses, and one of these has written as follows: "Am sorry to say that according to the rule of Wholesale Grocers' Guild, we will be unable to supply you. Am sorry about this, because when speaking to you I was not aware of this fact, but all members of this Guild are unable to sell [to] any co-operative society."

Quite evidently the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company, as a practising co-operative, would encounter this same hostility.

Hill's comments on western farmers were made at a time when he was disillusioned and perturbed. They indicate more probably his state of mind rather than his considered opinion. As a matter of fact the Company from first

²⁶ Calder Papers: A. W. Rideout, Manager, Canadian Bank of Commerce, Regina, had an interview with Honourable J. A. Calder and explained the bank's refusal to grant credit. In a letter to Hill, May 14, 1913, Rideout pointed out that \$23,000 paid up on \$52,000 subscribed was not an adequate basis for further borrowing.

²⁷ Calder Papers: The circular was signed by George Keen, Honourable Secretary-Treasurer of the Union.

to last found its strongest support among the farmers. The records of the Company show that as of May 10, 1910, of twenty-one shareholders, twelve were farmers and six were C.P.R. men. As of October 15, 1911, of two hundred and twenty-five shareholders, one hundred and seventy-four were farmers and forty were C.P.R. men.

It is interesting to note that the Broadview store, the only store fully stocked and staffed, more than held its own through 1911 and 1912 and was doing a good business to the end. Farmers supported this store, a "going concern", but did not patronize branches inadequately stocked.²⁸ Undoubtedly there was a movement to desert a losing cause during 1913. It must be remembered, however, that farmers could not borrow freely that year and except in the Broadview district would have little incentive to contribute further to a foundering business.

A fundamental cause of the collapse of the Company lay elsewhere—in a policy of too rapid expansion. It would have been sounder business practice to expand slowly as cash assets permitted. However, there was the moral obligation and the management could hardly do else than open branches in districts where shares had already been sold in quantity. The sale of shares should have been restricted to these districts thereafter until reserves had been built up. There appears to have been a conflict in policy between the natural desire to expand and be important and the safer wish to go slowly and be safe.²⁹ The over-expansion left the Company so vulnerable that the onset of a period of restricted credit together with opposition from other quarters caused a complete collapse.

The set of principles generally attributed to consumer co-operatives operating on the Rochdale basis include (a) open membership without distinction of race, class, creed or politics; (b) one member one vote, regardless of capital holdings; (c) selling at the prevailing market price; (d) limited interest on invested capital; (e) patronage dividends paid in proportion to purchases; (f) cash trading; (g) education of members and others in co-operative principles. The Saskatchewan Purchasing Company could qualify under (a), (b), (d), and (e). There seem to have been occasions when prices on certain goods were set below the going price. It is difficult to ascertain whether this was done as a matter of policy or to pass on advantages of a lucky buy, but apparently the Broadview store after the first year of operation abided by (c). As for (f), this seems to have been adhered to with the rather dangerous exception of at times accepting farm products in lieu of cash. And the Company appears not to have recognized the importance of (g) to the extent which prevailing circumstances demanded if success in promoting co-operative ideas was to be achieved.

The Saskatchewan Purchasing Company was short-lived and even the substantial brick building which housed the Broadview store no longer stands.

²⁸ Dominion Trust Company vs. W. R. Fallis. Fallis under cross examination stated that he and his friends stopped buying at the Welwyn branch because it didn't stock things they wanted.

²⁹ Dominion Trust Company vs. W. R. Fallis. In a letter written by Hill to Collyer of Welwyn, January 2, 1913, Hill states, "It has been suggested that Welwyn would welcome a branch store and we would be content to come provided the farmers in the Welwyn area subscribed sufficient shares for that purpose . . ." This certainly has a promotional tone. Later in the letter he writes "It is not our practice to canvas [sic] for branch stores and I am only troubling you in the matter because it has been represented to me that your town would prove a suitable point . . ." The conflict is evident. This letter was submitted as evidence. A public meeting was held in Welwyn at which Hill spoke, and a store opened in April.

But the Company left a legacy of experience, part of which has been incorporated in the statute books. The concern boasted its co-operative ideals and associations. This in itself was of interest to people in a province experimenting at that time in co-operative ownership. In a letter to J. M. Hill, following the collapse of the business, Mr. Calder wrote: "The lessons learned by the Company should be of considerable value in the case of other [such] organizations being created."³⁰ Undoubtedly he was referring to organizations likely to be set up under *The Agricultural Co-operative Associations Act of 1913*.³¹ In this connection it is significant that this statute sets out the principle of one vote per shareholder, with no voting by proxy. Further, this legislation makes provision for the building up of reserve funds and for patronage dividends.³² These sections cover too nearly the experience of the Company in the formative period to be merely coincidence.

It would be only fitting in conclusion to pay tribute to the unfaltering faith of the founders of the organization, centred in the Broadview district, who, despite anxiety, disappointment and personal loss, continued to believe in the rightness of co-operative principles. In the words of John McNeil, President of the Saskatchewan Purchasing Company in 1913: "The fact that the Company did not succeed did not in any way lessen the desire of its supporters for a change from what they considered to be an intolerable state of affairs. Within the lifetime, and with the aid of some of the founders of the Purchasing Company . . . Co-operatives and the Pools have come into being. In addition, different Legislative Assemblies have decided, often as a result of pressure, to remove some of the old injustices."³³ This fine old gentleman is "still a little proud that he fought in the vanguard of a force that ultimately was to emerge as a powerful and influential factor in the history of the province."³⁴

JOHN H. ARCHER

³⁰ Calder Papers: Letter of December 6, 1913.

³¹ *Statutes of Saskatchewan*, 1913, Ch. 62.

³² *Ibid.*, Section 14, 18.

³³ Quoted in a letter written to the author by D. McNeil, Broadview on January 8, 1942.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES

Reminiscences of Mrs. Edward Watson¹

BEFORE we came to Saskatchewan to live, we resided in a small town in the state of Minnesota, U.S.A. My husband had some years before, gone to Canada and filed on a homestead and then returned to the States. But later on as our homestead was open for cancellation, I proposed to my husband that I would go up and live on the land so we would not lose it. He was to remain behind and finish a job he had taken. This was agreed upon and he went up in February, 1905, and built a small shack. It was twelve by fourteen feet and only had one ply of boards on.

I arrived at Craik on the twelfth day of May, 1905, with my six small kiddies and only seven dollars in my purse to buy our groceries and other essentials. Our few household effects had been sent up in a friend's immigrant car and they had been hauled out to our little home on the prairies. After a drive of six miles we arrived at our future home. The cook stove had been put up, but the rest of our furniture had been thrown inside the door and the prospect was not inviting. However, there was no time for idle wishing, and as it was nearly dark, I spread a couple of mattresses on the floor and prepared for bed. My six children (the oldest was thirteen years and the baby was but seven months) and I were too tired to think of supper and were just going to lie down to sleep when a neighbor came over with a loaf of bread. Well I got out some butter and we had a little bit to eat and then wearily laid down for a much needed rest.

A week passed and my husband arrived. Such a relief I scarcely witnessed before, for all this burden now rolled off my shoulders.

Among the things we brought with us were six chickens, a small cow and a bag of seed potatoes. Thus we began our first years in homesteading. There was no well on our farm so we had to walk one-half mile for our drinking water or we had the option of drinking slough water. The latter was chosen because if we went to a well we had to walk and carry the water, and as this was hard to do, we were satisfied to use the slough water.

A place in which to house our chickens and cow was next needed, so one day we all got busy carrying sod and commenced to erect a coop. We all worked hard and before night our labor was rewarded by having completed all four sides. The next step was to build a roof. A few oak posts which we had brought from the States were called into use, and a roof was accordingly fitted up and thatched with quantities of prairie wool, which the children had gathered.

There were no jobs to be done around us so my husband helped a neighbor and in turn the neighbor plowed five acres for us. We planted some oats to feed

¹ *Editor's Note:* These reminiscences were written in 1924 by Mrs. Edward Watson of Keeler, and form a portion of an essay entered in a competition conducted during that year by the Women's Canadian Club of Regina. This and other entries in the 1924 competition are preserved in the Archives Division of the Legislative Library.

the cow during winter and also potatoes and a little garden of lettuce, radishes and so forth. As it happened it was a year of lots of rain and so our little garden flourished.

To the north of our home a good many miles there was a large farm in operation and my husband was fortunate enough to get a job at seventy-five cents a day during the summer, one dollar and twenty-five cents a day during harvest, and finally two dollars and twenty-five cents a day through threshing, as his job was to fire an engine from three o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock at night.

In the meantime the children and I had built our first sod barn. It was only fourteen by fourteen feet, but it was necessary to have a place to put the cow. The job was hard and we did not have much to work with. We had gotten a fire guard broken and it was from this that we got the necessary sod. The two oldest children carried the sod between them on a board, and I did the building. This was an exceedingly slow way, as the poor children could not carry enough to keep me busy; so I made a harness for the cow and made her help us in hauling the sod. This was a little better, but as the harness was not very substantial it was breaking continually and made things very trying, and because of this I had a job every evening of either repairing the old harness or making a new one. The utensils I had to level the sod consisted of an old butcher knife and the sticks which were lying around. Finally it was completed, and a roof was made from poplar poles which we managed to get out of the valley nearby.

Our next task was that of digging the potatoes. But as my husband got a day off, he got a team from one of our neighbors and we managed to get all the potatoes out easily. We had splendid potatoes, but as we could not get them into the cellar the same day, we piled them up in several small piles and covered them over with potato tops and a little dirt. That same night we had a real frost and many of them were frozen.

In spite of the hardships which I and my family endured during the pioneer days, I look back upon those days with a fondness which never dies but rather increases as the years roll by.

A New Questionnaire for Pioneers

THE previous issue of *Saskatchewan History* contained an article on pioneer diet which described some of the problems and expedients of the pioneer housewife in feeding her family. Perhaps you were one of those who completed the pioneer diet questionnaire and thus helped supply information for the article. Perhaps it reminded you of some of your own early experiences in the province. Perhaps you would like to complete Questionnaire No. 2 which the Saskatchewan Archives Office is now circulating, entitled PIONEER EXPERIENCES: A GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE.

Why did you come to the West? Did you have any exciting experiences on the way out? How did you earn a living in Western Canada? Did you get many of your supplies through the mail order catalogue? How did you travel in the early days? Were you or one of your friends the "first" to do something in your district—owned the first car? was the first president of a local organization or served on the first school board? was the first to be married in the new church? was the first from your district to attend the Normal School? Can you tell how some of the places in the community got their names? Do you know of any old letters, diaries, minute books of organizations, etc., which tell something of the early history of your community? What important changes have occurred in your community? These are some of the questions you will find in this second questionnaire, which is intended for persons who lived in Western Canada before 1914, and may be answered by anyone who has personal experience of the pioneer years whether born in this province or not. The Archives Office invites all early settlers, whether their homeland was the British Isles, continental Europe, Eastern Canada, the United States, or any other part of the world, to complete questionnaires and thus assist in augmenting existing sources of information on early provincial settlement.

All completed questionnaires will be preserved as part of the permanent record of our province. Also, as in the case of the pioneer diet questionnaire, a report on information secured from these questionnaires will appear in *Saskatchewan History*.

Questionnaires may be obtained upon request from:

Saskatchewan Archives Office,
University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, Sask.

Saskatchewan Archives Questionnaire No. 1, entitled PIONEER DIET: WHAT DID WESTERN CANADIAN PIONEERS EAT? is still being circulated. If you have not already completed it, and would like to do so, ask for a copy when you send for Questionnaire No. 2.

E.E.

The Newspaper Scrapbook

SOME months ago four head of cattle belonging to the Lieutenant-Governor strayed away from Battleford, and although diligent and extensive search was made no sign of them could be found. Just as hope of recovering them had almost died out they were restored in a most unexpected manner. They had travelled south, and were discovered by some Indians out on the plains about seventy miles from here. Reasoning that they had strayed from the north, two of the Indians were deputed to drive them to Battleford in the hope of finding an owner for them. The conduct of these men, who were non-treaty Indians, in thus undertaking to bring the cattle across the plains in the depth of winter on the mere chance of finding an owner for them, at a time when they were short of provisions and could have killed the animals without any fear of detection, is worthy of the highest praise. In addition to the customary reward of five dollars a head for bringing in stray cattle the Governor gave the Indians a substantial evidence of his appreciation of their sterling honesty.

—*Saskatchewan Herald* (Battleford), December 29, 1879.

WORD was received here on Thursday that Mr. James McKay, Barrister, had been made a Queen's Counsel. Mr. McKay is now receiving the hearty congratulations of his many friends, upon having been selected as the first lawyer in Saskatchewan to receive the title. The new Queen's Counsel is a son of the late Chief Factor Wm. McKay and was educated at St. John's College, Winnipeg, graduating therefrom in 1832 with the degree of B.A. in Classical Honours and obtaining at the same time the Manitoba University Medal, which means competition with the students of all the other colleges. He was also awarded the college medal given for proficiency in ancient and modern history and classics, and was successful in competing for a medal given by Lord Dufferin for proficiency in classical studies.

Mr. McKay entered upon the study of law in 1882 in the office of Bain, Blanchard and Mulock in Winnipeg. His law studies were interrupted by the breaking out of the Rebellion in 1885, in which he served his native country with considerable distinction. He was called to the Bar in 1886 and practised in the city of Winnipeg for a year.

In 1887 a large number of young barristers left Winnipeg for other cities and towns. Mr. McKay being of this number came to Prince Albert forming a partnership with Mr. Stephen Brewster which continued until that gentleman's acceptance of the position of Registrar of the E.S.R. District, since continuing his large practice single-handed until recently becoming associated with Mr. J. A. McCaul. Mr. McKay has been an active figure in legal, social, athletic and other circles in Prince Albert during his residence. He has by energy, close attention to business and keeping his record clear and clean been successful in his practice and is justly entitled to the high honour conferred upon him.

—*The Saskatchewan Times* (Prince Albert), December 29, 1893.

Book Reviews

THE NORTH AMERICAN BUFFALO: A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE SPECIES IN ITS WILD STATE. By *Frank Gilbert Roe*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951. Pp. viii, 957, front. \$12.00.

THE American Bison ranged in primitive times from the state of Pennsylvania to the Rockies and from Texas to the Great Slave Lake. The vastness of its original numbers is a byword. From time immemorial it was the assured support of primitive man. Under the impact of white men it wilted and almost entirely disappeared as a wild animal within not very much more than a century of serious contact. Its meat and hides made it economically and politically important while its numbers lasted, and a trade in its bones prolonged its economic importance after its extermination. Quite apart from his importance and the sensational nature of his extermination, the Bison is an impressive figure too in his personal appearance. Every way he is a beast who merits a thorough and competent history.

For this reason the present work is welcome. Mr. Roe begins with a brief discussion of extinct species of American Bison. He then deals with the home and habits of the historic species and its natural enemies. This leads on to the white man's discovery of the bison, its numbers and extermination. Mr. Roe's closing chapters deal with the problems of migration and the influence of the bison on Indian mentality. The book ends with a long series of appendices on important side issues which Mr. Roe has wisely not permitted to clog his text. All this has been the spare time work of an amateur, who has read vastly, writes crisply and clearly and handles sources with judgment. In the historical field he reaches professional standards of competence.

Mr. Roe has shown great courage, as well as great ability, in writing this book for his subject is one where two sciences meet—history and biology. When an amateur launches, as Mr. Roe has done, into two professional fields, he runs great risk of error and must depend a great deal upon his guides. On the biological side, we think, Mr. Roe has been unfortunate. He has been led to believe that the behaviour of an animal in captivity is never to be accepted as a guide to its behaviour in nature and, therefore, he states that he “deliberately refrained from going” to Wainwright to make serious studies of captive bison there (p.202). This self-denying ordinance to reject the habits of modern captive bison as evidence of the habits of their forebears seems to us to have led Mr. Roe into error.

It is, of course, quite true that animals in close confinement will behave abnormally. So an outstanding European authority, Dr. Hediger, notes that in some cases captive animals may refuse to breed, or if they breed, refuse to rear their young; in other cases he finds hyper-sexuality and precociously early breeding to be the results of captivity. But these changes have occurred in close confinement. In spacious confinement, in or near the native habitat, fundamental habits seem but little altered. This appears in two recent studies of the Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) in Britain. Dr. Fraser Darling published in 1937 a study

of the wild Red Deer of Scotland, and in 1949 Mr. G. K. Whitehead published a study of deer confined in English parks. Many of these parks are some centuries old and often the deer in them are long inbred; when new blood has been brought in, it has commonly come from other parks where the animals were equally confined. Yet, despite their long confinement, the basic habits of park deer vary hardly at all from those of wild deer. Such things as the dates of the growth and shedding of antlers, the season of the rut, the periods of gestation and lactation remain stable.

For these reasons we think that the behaviour of captive bison stamps Mr. Roe as being at some points conspicuously at fault. For example on page ninety-eight he tells us that the bison calf "probably" did not suckle "for more than three or four months." But from Woburn Abbey, where a considerable private herd of bison has been kept for half a century, the Duke of Bedford writes that calves should be separated from their mothers in December, because "if this is not done the calves continue to suck for an indefinite period and the cows may get badly pulled down in condition." True to the Duke's observation, a cow at Winnipeg, who failed to calve in 1951, was in September of that year still suckling her daughter of 1950. About the middle of the 1950-1951 winter another cow at Winnipeg died, her orphaned bull calf thereafter seemed to make no further growth and by spring was dwarfed in size by his two half sisters, whose milk ration had not been so untimely cut off.

From these observations we are led to believe that the period of a bison calf's dependence on its mother was very much greater than Mr. Roe supposes. This point may seem to have some importance, particularly for the bison of Canada. On the summer hunts for pemmican from Red River, it was cows the hunters killed, because no one who could avoid it would eat bull beef; and on their winter hunts for robes, it was again the cows the hunters killed because a bull robe was too bulky for marketing. The long suckling period would probably lead to the death of motherless calves after both hunts and thus cause the hunters to kill two generations in one—small wonder the bison's disappearance was swift, if this was so.

Again, Mr. Roe's statement that "it is almost certain that the buffalo heifer, running wild, would bear at two years old" (p.506) seems contrary to all experience with captive bison. In captivity a bison heifer *may* come into heat at two and bear at three, but more often she will wait another year, and when the earlier breeding occurs it is very possibly an example of that precocious maturity which captivity causes. The error Mr. Roe makes here must in a measure upset a careful and closely argued criticism of Seton's estimate of the numbers of the buffalo.

Another point on which we find it hard to agree with Mr. Roe is his insistence on the irregularity of the bison's migrations. Up to a point his insistence here must be judged a sound reaction to real provocation. There has been a legend that the bison made an annual migration from the Saskatchewan to the Gulf of Mexico. This is conspicuous nonsense, and Mr. Roe does well to refute it. But he goes further and proceeds also to refute the belief that the bison made fairly regular *local* migrations. It is here that we disagree with him.

The principal, or, at any rate, the clearest, authority on the local migration of the bison is H. Y. Hind. He says, "Red River hunters recognize two grand divisions of the buffalo, those of the Grand Coteau and Red River and those of the Saskatchewan." Here one marks that Hind writes as a reporter and the men he quotes were those whose livelihood depended on their knowing where to look for the buffalo. After this introduction Hind proceeds to sketch the routes of the annual wanderings of these "two grand divisions of the buffalo" as the Red River hunters reported them and concludes—"It is almost needless to remark again that fires interfere with this systematic migration, but there are no other impediments which will divert the buffalo from their course." Beyond these "grand divisions" Hind noted, "other ranges of immense herds exist beyond the Missouri towards the south."

Now, as it seems to us, no one general pattern of migration for all bison can be deduced from Hind's report; rather it would appear that different herds ranging different areas might be expected to make different movements within those areas. It would also appear that Hind's authority was the very best—hunters whose livelihood required that they should know where to find their quarry. Again, Hind was one of the very few visitors to the old West who had a competent scientific training. For these reasons we have always believed Hind. Mr. Roe will have none of him.

Certainly there are grounds for arguing against Hind's view. In Canada he found bison migrating north in winter and south in summer. From Arkansas Colonel Dodge reported they made a precisely opposite movement. At one point on his own journey Hind failed to find the buffalo "on schedule." Alexander Ross alleges that the Red River hunters did not know on starting where the bison would be found. None of the evidence that can be amassed against Hind is overlooked by Mr. Roe.

Here is a case where every man must interpret the sources as he judges best. But, if it be granted that different herds tended to keep to their own ranges, we see no reason why the Arkansas herds should not winter in the southern part of their range, which was the warmest, and the Saskatchewan herds in the northern part, which was best timbered and most sheltered; and the Blackfeet told Palliser, as the Red River hunters told Hind, that the buffalo of the Saskatchewan country wintered in the north at "the edge of the woods." We also think Professor Hind is probably a more reliable reporter than Ross, the Red River schoolmaster (if only because the first was a man with a serious scientific training). Nor are we surprised that Hind should miss the bison at one point of their itinerary where he expected them. Their conspicuousness is easily exaggerated, and Mr. Roe managed to spend three-fifths of the Sundays of the summer of 1924 in Wainwright Park, which then contained nine thousand bison, without ever once seeing an animal. Nor can migrating animals be expected ever to move too rigidly "on schedule," and migration is something on which one must generalize. In the case of the bison, however, the generalization would seem to need to be confined to the movements of one "grand division" at a time and not cover the whole species. For these reasons Mr. Roe does not appear to us

to have said the last word on the migrations of the bison, though he has certainly said a word that demands very close attention from all who follow him.

It is the errors of the best books that do most harm to history, for bad books soon sink of their own rottenness and have little lasting influence. It is, therefore, because we judge Mr. Roe to have written a very good book that we think it worthwhile to spend so much space in arguing with him over the few points where he seems to us at fault. The good qualities of his book are obvious. Not many authors can have gathered together so vast a mass of sources bearing on one problem of Western history. Apart, perhaps, from a tendency to harp too much on the subject of migration, this mass of material is well organized. To a variety of authors of widely differing values, Mr. Roe brings a very careful and shrewd literary judgment. Reading his criticism of Dr. Hornaday smacks of watching Joe Louis deal with a punching bag (with this difference, however, that one is more inclined to feel that Hornaday deserves what he is getting). No student of Western history can afford to overlook this book. Above all, it should be most encouraging to the non-professional reader as evidence of how well the amateur can hold his own in so professional a field as history has become today.

RICHARD GLOVER

CANADA'S CENTURY. By D. M. LeBourdais. Toronto: The Methuen Company of Canada Limited, 1951. Pp. ix, 214; illus. \$4.00.

THIS book is the latest addition to the numerous books, articles, and pamphlets which have been published on the subject of Canada's potential greatness. Any survey of Canadian geography seems to reflect optimism, and the tone of this book is reminiscent of its many predecessors. One can turn to Sandford Fleming's account of his journey across Canada exactly eighty years ago to find glowing descriptions of "sea-pastures . . . copper and silver mines so rich as to recall stories of the Arabian nights . . . illimitable coal measures and . . . deep gorges filled with mighty timber." D. M. LeBourdais rediscovers all these, adding to them the revelations of the intervening years and the resources which an age of oil and the atom make significant. Mr. LeBourdais may have neither the sheer passion of Fleming nor the oratorical touch of Sir Wilfred Laurier, to whom the title phrase is ascribed, but, basing his conclusions on surer evidence, he presents a fascinating description of the Canadian scene and a convincing brief for the greatness of its future.

Mr. LeBourdais does not attempt to survey all of Canada, but deals principally with those parts as yet largely undeveloped. He presents a wealth of information in what is a relatively short survey. Thus one can find the details of the discovery and development of almost any of the great mining fields, and the organizational structure of companies such as that financing the opening up of the Labrador iron field. The details are interesting and pertinent, and do not seem seriously to break up the flow of his description. Eighteen full-page photographs of Canadian scenes provide ample illustration, while two maps of the northern hemisphere graphically point up our aerial proximity to the Soviet

Union, as well as the possibility of a land link through Alaska to Asia. The book is not documented, but a bibliography is appended.

It is impossible to do more than to suggest the nature of the evidence that Mr. LeBourdais amasses to support his thesis that Canada may reasonably expect to fulfill her early expectations in the remaining half of the century. He bases that conclusion on the resources of the Canadian Shield, the petroleum and natural gas reserves of the Great Central basin, and Canada's position in the northern half of North America, made strategically important by aviation. He realizes the problems involved in developing this potential wealth, and that oil fields and mines will be developed by large corporations, dominated by American capital, that large scale operations will be necessary to open up the remaining agricultural lands, and that governmental provision of services will be necessary. He would launch us on a new railway building era in order to provide an outlet for the Peace River area on the Pacific and to tap the Mackenzie Valley, with another railway to link Hudson Bay, the Mackenzie Valley, and the Pacific. Canadians, with the experience of the past in mind, may not be easily stirred into supporting government construction of railways as developmental projects.

One is constantly intrigued by predictions with regard to specific regions and localities. For instance, LeBourdais sees the possibility of the greatest agricultural production and the greatest industrial concentration occurring in northern Alberta. Edmonton, he believes, will be one of the great cities of the future, if not second to Montreal, then third to Montreal and Vancouver. Torontonians will note this with interest! Another of the dreams of the future is a land route to Siberia, something which Mr. LeBourdais regards quite rightly as very much dependent upon the course of world politics.

A geographic determinist, Mr. LeBourdais states categorically, "Geographic features are fundamental, and, everything else being equal, are decisive in determining the destiny of a region." One of the inferences based on this theory is that the Canadian Shield may so influence the people as to change the character of Quebec. Whilst granting full recognition to the geographic factor, one cannot help but feel that other factors, such as race and religion, have been extremely significant in the course of human affairs, and that, in Canada, much that has happened would seem to have been in spite of geography rather than because of it. Perhaps Mr. LeBourdais wavers in this approach when he asks, "Whether, having provided a high level of prosperity for a much larger population, and having attained a prominent place among the nations of the world, Canada will thereby have attained greatness?" His answer is that "it is still possible that the high level of material well-being which Canada can provide may, nevertheless, fall short of creating the culture-bed of a great people, for true greatness consists of more than mass production of those mechanical contrivances which contribute so largely to the comfort and conveniences of life." Having taken note of this, Mr. LeBourdais sees in the development of our natural resources, in our progress in the arts and science, and in our assumption of responsibility in world affairs the "signs of an emerging greatness which might tend to encourage the hope that in due course it may truly be said that the twentieth century was indeed Canada's."

The sustained optimism of the whole work is encouraging at a time when pessimism over world affairs is prevalent. Any Canadian would be advised to look into this readable and inspiring account of Canada's century.

ALLAN R. TURNER

FROM OXEN TO AIRPLANE: MANTARIO, 1908-1950. Mantario: Mantario Homemakers' Club, 1951. Pp. 104, illus., maps. \$2.00.

THIS excellent local history was submitted in "The Tweedsmuir Village Histories" competition and won third prize in the province. The history was compiled by pioneers, neighbors and friends and was edited and arranged by Mrs. R. L. Shipley. The acknowledgment gives special thanks to Mrs. E. S. Fagan, Mrs. A. M. Fraser, Mrs. A. Seeley, Mr. C. Evans Sargent, Mr. A. M. Anderson, Mr. Harry Neal and Mr. M. Aitken. A genuine community effort, the whole work reflects great credit on the enterprise and ability of the Mantario Homemakers' Club—the oldest surviving Homemakers' Club in Saskatchewan.

While *From Oxen to Airplane* is arranged topically, due regard has been paid to chronological development within each unit. The choice of material and the order of chapters is good; indeed, the history could well serve as a working model for writers of local histories. The opening chapter describes the geographic setting and the topographical features of the Mantario district, which covers about a hundred square miles and is located about eleven miles from the Alberta boundary, and about forty miles north of the South Saskatchewan River. Early chapters deal with the Indians, the pioneer settlement, old-timers, water and its significance, trails and early transportation problems. The last eight chapters are more distinctly topical. These tell of political activities, schools, women's organizations, churches, folklore, the growth of the village of Mantario, and the impact of war on the community.

The chapter on pioneer settlement, the longest in the book, will be of absorbing interest to those who took part in the settling of the West. Though the younger generation may scoff a little at the oft told tales and may even think that over-emphasis has been laid on the homestead days, a little serious reflection will show that the pioneers have only been accorded their due. First things should come first. In this chapter the names of the early settlers have been noted while specific mention is also made of the enterprising farmers who first brought in threshing machines, and later, combines. A homestead map of 1910 is a valuable addition. The story is full of interesting detail and humorous anecdote. Perhaps the only criticism is that too much has been attempted in too short a space. Undoubtedly the editor was faced with the hard task of selecting from a great mass of material, and in an effort to include as much as possible about as many people as possible parts of the story have been poorly integrated. The overall impression is favorable nevertheless, and the general accuracy of the picture of pioneer conditions is a tribute to the skill of the editor.

A considerable part of this history has been devoted to the development of transportation and communication in the area. The section on early trails is very well done and, with the accompanying map, gives a clear picture of the

difficulties encountered. The struggle for municipal and provincial highways follows on smoothly, while the story is brought up-to-date with some pertinent comments on the present-day isolation of settlers in Golden Valley and Sunshine Valley. The evolution of motive power is well handled with just the proper degree of nostalgia for Buck and Star, the top buggy, and the bunkcar.

The editor wisely decided to give separate chapters to the growth of churches, schools, local organizations, the village of Mantario and the community war effort. A full account is given of each topic and while the arrangement is strictly topical the reader has become sufficiently familiar with the names which occur in each section that the continuity of the history is not broken. The discussion on irrigation does go somewhat far afield but the importance of water to the area is so great that this fuller development of the subject is probably justified. It is disappointing that there was not a separate chapter on farmers' organizations. Many of the recreational activities of the farmers have been brought out, but apart from the mention of a U.G.G. elevator in Mantario there is no specific reference to the U.G.G. or to any farmers' organization. The absence of such a unit would in itself be significant.

From Oxen to Airplane is well illustrated and has good maps. The photo used as a frontispiece was a happy choice. It is a picture of a bachelor homesteader stooking his crop with a background of cloud and field which typify the grandeur of the prairie scene. Other pictures of oxen-drawn wagons, early steam engines, mule teams and early cars emphasize the evolution of transportation in the district. There is a volume of history in the pictures of sod shacks and shanties alone. While the historian can rarely find much to praise in the advertising which finds its way into local publications, the advertisement on page one hundred and one of this volume is worthy of mention. A general merchant of Kindersley had had the imagination to insert a picture of his store in the early days and to include in his message a good deal of information on the clothing used in pioneer days, the price of such materials, and some items of like interest.

The writing of a local history is a particularly difficult albeit a most useful and satisfying task. While it is not usually difficult to gather old-timers' tales and local color, it is often difficult to establish a basis of accurate fact concerning the organization of early institutions. The selection and organization of material is certain to cause the editor much worry particularly when the project is a community one. Invariably there will be local critics who honestly believe that emphasis has been misplaced. Then, too, there is the difficulty of proof reading by long distance. In spite of these difficulties the compilation of local history can be an exhilarating undertaking. Historians of the future will use such works as stepping stones to broader histories. *From Oxen to Airplane: Mantario, 1908-1950*, is an outstanding example of a well rounded local history. The editor and all those who contributed of time and effort deserve great praise for a very fine piece of work.

JOHN H. ARCHER

THE STORY OF PORCUPINE PLAIN. Compiled by the Grade Nine Social Studies Class of 1950-1951, Porcupine Plain High School, Sylvia Skawski, editor; Mr. G. W. Chase, B.A., teacher, [1951]; mimeographed, .50c.

THIS mimeographed booklet is an admirable effort by juveniles to record the development of a flourishing village in north-eastern Saskatchewan from 1919 to the present. The content is divided into three suitable chapters illustrated with drawings, maps and graphs, supplemented with anecdotes collected from pioneers and comments by the pupils in an evaluation of their project.

Tracing the story of the area from 1691 when Henry Kelsey first reached the Red Deer River, the pupils have narrated in rough chronology the evolution of the "settlement" through the periods of pioneering, depression, and post-war expansion. The coming of settlers, construction of roads and railways, introduction of hospitals, schools and entertainment, establishment of the R.C.M.P. detachment and civic institutions, have been traced with a freshness and coherence worthy of more mature students of local history. Particularly stimulating are the anecdotes collected of the "good old days."

It is most encouraging to find a group of high school students who have been willing to follow the lead of their teacher in co-operating to record local traditions which will all too soon be forgotten.

C. TALLANT

THE FIRST SIXTY YEARS. A HISTORY OF EDEN SCHOOL AND DISTRICT FROM 1890 TO 1950. By *Ralph Jowsey*. Saltcoats: The Author, 1950. Pp. 46, mimeographed.

EDEN school has little to distinguish it from hundreds of other prairie schools, but Mr. Jowsey, in simple language and by a judicious selection of intimate detail, has succeeded in transmitting to the casual reader his own affectionate interest in the annals of the school and community. As a native of the district and as secretary-treasurer of the school board, the author has been able to draw on the documentary records and on his own recollections and those of the few surviving pioneers; using these materials, he has produced a narrative of the sustained and effective effort which provided educational opportunities for the children of the community.

Eden School District No. 197 was established in 1890 in what was then a predominantly Scottish community. The mobility of the prairie population has erased the original homogeneity and today folk of Ukrainian, Polish, Hungarian, Dutch, German, English and Irish background are to be found there as well. Mr. Jowsey describes the founding of the settlement in which Eden school is located and then gives a chronological narrative of the history of the school in terms of its physical plant, financial basis and board membership. About one third of the booklet is devoted to a valuable and interesting section which lists the thirty-seven teachers who have come and gone in the sixty years since the school was founded; there are biographical sketches of the first ten and informative notes on the present addresses and occupations of the remaining twenty-seven.

Mr. Jowsey is to be congratulated on the preparation of this unpretentious but effective study of educational effort in a rural community. Were similar studies available for other districts in the province they would provide an important body of source material for social history; even more important, they would focus the attention of the community on the achievements and changes which mark the progress of mankind and link local effort with world history.

L. H. THOMAS

THE NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE, 1873-1893. *By John Peter Turner.* Ottawa: King's Printer, 1950. 2 vols. Pp. xiii, 686; vii, 610. illus. map. Cloth \$7.00, paper \$5.00.

THIS lengthy work deals with the first two decades of the history of the Mounted Police in Western Canada. The author, who died in 1948, was for many years the Conservation Editor of *Rod and Gun* and was a well known authority on Canadian wildlife. From 1939 until his death he was in the employ of the Force as "official historian." Mr. Turner has drawn largely on the annual reports of the Commissioners, and on many unprinted and even unwritten sources such as diaries, letters, and the personal reminiscences of many who lived through the period of which he writes. The value of the book is greatly enhanced by a detailed map and numerous illustrations, including a number of reproductions of photographs of forts which have long since disappeared.

Anyone interested in the Mounted Police or in the early history of the West can dip into Mr. Turner's narrative and read with pleasure what he has to say of the life of the police, of their organization, numbers, establishments, clothing and equipment. He can learn also of the doings of Indians, Métis, farmers, ranchmen and railwaymen. He can find stories of horse stealing, liquor smuggling, riot, rebellion and murder. All this and much more in a wealth of detail which extends over thirteen hundred pages is offered for the pleasure and instruction of the general reader.

But this is not a work for the general reader. The initiator of the project, Commissioner Wood, and the author, take pains to make it clear that the entertainment of the public was not the prime object. This book is "in large part a work of reference, without unnecessary embellishments, special featuring of heroics or literary pretensions," says Mr. Turner in his Foreword. It is "the official and departmental history of the first twenty years of the Force," adds Commissioner Wood in his Introduction. The book, it seems, was commissioned by a senior official in a government department as an official history designed to be used as a work of reference.

A work of reference in the ordinary sense of the word it can hardly be, for the author ignores, if he is not completely ignorant of all the principles which govern the writing of authoritative history. He is obviously inexperienced and unskilled in the selection, arrangement and interpretation of historical material; he gives only the barest hints of the authorities and other sources used; there are no specific citations; and the index is badly compiled and wholly inadequate.

It is difficult to see what use the scholar or the general reader seeking special information can make of it, for, even if he finds what he wants, there is no assurance of the reliability of the source used. This is particularly unfortunate in a work dealing with the history of the West, where materials are scattered and scanty, and where the few workers welcome any definite guidance that can be given.

Nor is the book much more useful to those who, prepared to take the facts on faith, look only for a clear narrative and an intelligent interpretation of the work of the Mounted Police in the West. Mr. Turner gives a series of impressions of difficult tasks faithfully and competently performed, and cumulatively these are convincing, but they are not new. This has been done before, although never at such length and in such minute detail. But nothing important is added to our understanding of the community as a whole or of the changing role of the police in it; and if the Force or any of its members had any weaknesses they have escaped the observation of the author. On such debatable matters as the part played by the police in the Rebellion, matters treated by other authorities, Mr. Turner is frankly partisan, and he makes no mention of any views which might differ from his own. This bias, along with a total lack of logic in organization, of distinction in style or of perception in the interpretation of facts, makes it impossible to accept Mr. Turner's work as the definitive history which it professes to be, and which would have been so welcome to the increasing number of students of Western history.

Undoubtedly the publication of this mass of information from unpublished diaries, and from the relatively inaccessible annual reports is a service to the ordinary reader; and the fact that the work was obviously a labour of love gives a certain warmth to the rather wordy and wandering style. Indeed, at times the enthusiasm of the writer does inspire the simple and vigorous description that his subject requires. No one would under-estimate the value of Mr. Turner's knowledge and experience. But it is disappointing and disheartening to find a department of the national government treating a matter of great importance in provincial and national life in a manner at once so extravagant and so casual. If money was available for an official history it was surely a pity to expend it without any reference to modern standards of historiography. Good will and industry are not alone sufficient, even for the writing of history.

HILDA NEATBY

Notes and Correspondence

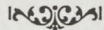
THE majority of our readers seem to like the new cover design which appeared on Volume 5, No. 1, of *Saskatchewan History*. The previous design was by Mr. D. G. Whitehead, artist for the Modern Press Limited, Saskatoon, and was also very favorably received. Our present policy is to adopt a new cover design from time to time.

An article by Dr. R. C. Merifield of Regina, entitled "Medicine of the Red Man," appeared in the *National Home Monthly* of October, 1950. It describes the remedies used by the Indians of the Kinistino district, where Dr. Merifield practiced from 1922 to 1935. The author shows that many of the medicines which seem strange to white men have been based on therapeutic principles which are now being revealed by scientific research.

An analysis of the circumstances which led to the founding of Cumberland House, the Hudson's Bay Company's first far inland trading post and the oldest permanent settlement in Saskatchewan, is contained in an excellent article in December, 1951, issue of *The Beaver*, written by Dr. Richard Glover of the University of Manitoba. The same issue also contains a well illustrated article by L. M. Ackerman on Saskatchewan's Western Development Museum, entitled "From the Cradle to the Combine."

Correction: We wish to correct an error which appears on page six of the last issue of *Saskatchewan History*. Mr. Joseph R. Bird's name is incorrectly given as Mr. John R. Bird.

Dr. A. F. Deverell of the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan after examining some earlier issues of *Saskatchewan History*, writes as follows: "This is history in its real and natural setting for our own school pupils. I think much of the material in them quite usable at the senior elementary school level as well as in high school. I shall certainly acquaint my teachers with them."



Contributors

EARL G. DRAKE is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan and is presently engaged in post graduate work at the University of Toronto. The first part of his article on pioneer journalism appeared in Volume 5, No. 1, of *Saskatchewan History*.

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The Saskatchewan Archives Board

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PURPOSE

The Saskatchewan Archives Board was established by an act of the Legislative Assembly in 1945 for the purpose of providing facilities for the collection, care and use of source material relating to the history of Saskatchewan.

FACILITIES

1. Two record depositories, one at the University of Saskatchewan (309-311 Field Husbandry Building), and the other in conjunction with the Legislative Library (275 Legislative Building). Both buildings of fireproof construction.
2. A trained staff to service the records and assist researchers.
3. Equipment for microfilming and reading microfilm.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

1. The care of non-current provincial government records which have been transferred to archives custody.
2. The collection and care of papers and documents produced by businesses, organizations, municipal bodies, school districts, and individuals, either in original form or as microfilm copies.
3. A reference service for inquiries relating to the history of Saskatchewan.
4. Publication of the magazine *Saskatchewan History*, biennial archives reports, and special publications.
5. In general, to provide a program of activities designed to supplement the services and collections provided by the University and Government libraries and by the various public libraries and local historical societies in the province.

HOW YOU CAN PROMOTE

HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN SASKATCHEWAN

1. By visiting the Archives Board offices in Regina and Saskatoon and becoming familiar with their collections and services.
2. By notifying the Provincial Archivist of the existence of collections of letters, diaries, reminiscences, historical photographs, minute books of organizations, pioneer storekeepers' and other business records, files of Saskatchewan newspapers and periodicals no longer being published. These should be permanently preserved by transfer to one of the Archives Board depositories or by being loaned to the Provincial Archivist for the production of a microfilm copy.
3. By becoming a regular or a sustaining subscriber to *Saskatchewan History* and by making the magazine known to your friends.
4. By forming a district or community historical society, or a historical committee of the local Chamber of Commerce, service club, Homemakers' Club or other well established local organization, for the purpose of collecting and encouraging the preservation of historical source materials in the community.

MEMORY FAILS, PIONEERS AND EYE-WITNESSES OF GREAT
EVENTS PASS FROM THE SCENE OF THEIR LABOURS,
BUT A RECORD CAN SPEAK TO GENERATIONS
YET UNBORN

